DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 068 CE 047 907

AUTHOR	Moellman, Carol J.
TITLE	Effective State Councils on Vocational Education: A Guide for Staff. Special Publication Series No. 55.
INSTITUTION	Ohio State Univ., Columbus. National Center for Research in Vocational Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	87
GRANT	G008620030
NOTE	129p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center Publications, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090 (Order No. SN55--$11.50).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Advisory Committees; Personnel Policy; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; *Staff Role; *State Boards of Education; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Carl D Perkins Vocational Education Act 1984

ABSTRACT

This handbook is designed to assist individuals employed by state councils on vocational education in carrying out the council's mandated responsibilities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. Chapter 1 discusses council appointments, new member orientation, and keeping members involved and informed. Chapter 2 discusses staff organization, responsibility for staffing, staff evaluation, staff salary, and credibility. In chapter 3, council finances are examined in terms of the selection of a fiscal agent, choosing a location for office facilities, and investing in office equipment. Chapter 4 describes council meetings--both regular and public. Number of meetings, dates, location, public meeting laws, agenda preparation, and presentations to the council are covered. Chapter 5 addresses the administration and organization of council activities, including coordination, information dissemination, and staff reporting. Chapter 6 discusses liaison relationships at the state and federal levels. The next chapter, on policies, procedures, and practices, includes examples of items to address in personnel policies, guidelines for conference participation, putting together a state council handbook, and establishing state council bylaws. In the last chapter, the manner in which the council is to fulfill each mandate as presented in the Perkins Act is listed and aligned with the audience for this information. Suggestions to assist councils in addressing their mandated responsibilities are provided. (YLB)

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ED284068

Special Publication Series No. 55

EFFECTIVE STATE COUNCILS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A GUIDE FOR STAFF

Carol J. Moellman
Illinois Council on Vocational Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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FUNDING INFORMATION

Project Title:	National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Clearinghouse
Grant Number:	G008620030
Project Number:	051BH60001A
Act under Which Funds Administered:	Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, P.L. 98-524, 1984
Source of Grant:	Office of Vocational and Adult Education U.S. Department of Education Washington, D.C. 20202
Grantee:	The National Center for Research in Vocational Education The Ohio State University 1960 Kenny Road Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090
Acting Executive Director:	Chester K. Hansen
Disclaimer:	This publication was prepared pursuant to a grant with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official U.S. Department of Education position or policy.
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FOREWORD

State council on vocational education staff are responsible for organizing, focusing, and carrying out the activities of the council membership as mandated by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984. This handbook enables council staff to benefit from the innovative and successful practices of council staff in other states.

The profession is indebted to Carol J. Moellman for her scholarship in preparing this paper. Ms. Moellman has been Assistant Executive Director of the Illinois Council on Vocational Education since 1980. Previously, she held administrative positions in vocational education within the Kansas State Department of Education.

The National Center wishes to acknowledge the leadership provided to this effort by Dr. Robert E. Taylor, recently retired Executive Director. Fredi Griggs, Missouri Chair, Council on Vocational Education; Dr. Mark Newton, Associate Director, Field Services and Personnel Development Division, and Dr. Harold Starr, Senior Research Specialist, of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, contributed to the development of the paper through their critical reviews of the manuscript. Dr. Wesley E. Budke, Senior Research Specialist, coordinated the paper's development, assisted by Ruth Gordon and Sandra Kerka, Program Associates, and Catherine Thompson, Publications Specialist. Clarine Cotton, Marjorie Dellinger, Jean Messick, Sally Robinson, and Sarah Guda provided clerical support, and Janet Ray served as word processor operator. Joan Blank of the National Center's Editorial Services edited the paper.

The author wishes to thank the following persons for their assistance in providing suggestions for content and sample materials: Peter Johnson, Illinois CoVE Executive Director; Harlan Giese, Iowa CoVE Executive Director; Dr. Donald Claycomb, Missouri CoVE Executive Director; Dr. Barbara Atkins, Michigan CoVE Executive Director; Dr. John Mercer, Minnesota CoVE Executive Director; Richard Cross, Maryland CoVE Assistant Director; Carl Herr, Pennsylvania CoVE former Executive Director; and Will Reece, Texas CoVE Executive Director. The author also acknowledges the support of the Illinois Council on Vocational Education and the entire Illinois CoVE staff for their critique, suggestions, and overall assistance.

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Acting Executive Director
National Center for Research
in Vocational Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This handbook is designed to be a resource for those persons employed by state councils on vocational education. The purposes of the handbook are to help clarify the role of staff, serve as a resource guide, and stimulate thinking about alternative approaches. It presents alternatives, suggestions, and examples of success.

The handbook identifies conditions that may affect council work, how these conditions tend to influence approaches, key factors that might alert staff to their existence, and where and how they may come into play. Therefore, alternatives are given and examples of states known to have expertise in the area or that work within identified conditions are cited in parentheses as resources.

The handbook is divided into several topical areas. The first, council membership, discusses council appointments, new member orientation, getting members involved, keeping members involved, and keeping members informed.

The second topic, council staff, discusses staff organization, responsibility for staffing, staff evaluation, staff salary, and credibility.

Council finances are examined in terms of the selection of a fiscal agent, choosing a location for office facilities, and investing in office equipment.

Council meetings, both regular and public meetings/hearings, are described in the next chapter. The number of meetings, meeting dates, meeting location, public meeting laws, preparing the agenda, and presentations to the council are among the subjects covered in this chapter.

The next chapter addresses the administration and organization of council activities. This includes coordination of activities, dissemination of information, and staff reporting.

Liaison relationships between councils and various groups and individuals are discussed next. Establishing such liaisons at the state and federal levels is described.

The chapter on policies, procedures, and practices includes examples of items that should be addressed in personnel policies; examples of fringe benefit packages provided by councils; job descriptions for executive director, associate or assistant executive director, research associate or evaluation specialist, administrative assistant or executive secretary, and secretary; guidelines for conference participation; putting together a state council handbook; and establishing state council bylaws.

In the last chapter, meeting the mandates, the manner in which each council is to fulfill the mandate is listed and aligned with the audience for the information. Suggestions to assist councils in addressing their mandated responsibilities are also provided.

INTRODUCTION

The State Council on Vocational Education as established by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 is a unique entity. Public education and other public sector services have long been accustomed to advisory groups of citizens or field experts, but the construction of the State Council on Vocational Education is characterized by criteria and responsibilities unlike any other.

This handbook is designed to be a resource for those persons employed by state councils on vocational education. The philosophy used throughout the handbook is that members are the council and staff work for the council. The basis for this philosophy is derived from statements in the Perkins Act that say, "Each State council shall . . ." and "council is authorized to obtain services of . . . personnel . . . to enable it [council] to carry out its function. . . ." Based on this concept, it is the role of the council to make recommendations, analyze, assess, report, evaluate, and advise while the staff performs services such as researching, drafting, providing, developing, carrying out, establishing rapport, organizing, and assisting.

Historically, when councils have became rubber stamps that simply review and approve staff work and ideas, they have lost interest, had poor attendance records and high turnover rates, and been ineffective as councils. The role of staff is delicate because staff must provide leadership without dictating, work while leading, and be movers and shakers from behind the scenes.

To the User

The handbook is designed to assist those individuals employed by the council to help carry out the council's mandated responsibilities under the Perkins Act. The handbook does not attempt to be a "how-to" book. The differences among states, caused in part by the varied organizational structures of state government, would make such an attempt futile. What it does attempt to do is present alternatives, suggestions, and examples of success. Its flavor is one of "you might want to consider . . ." and "councils have been successful when . . ."

The purposes of the handbook are to help clarify the role of staff, serve as a resource guide, and stimulate thinking about alternative approaches. While a major intent of the handbook is to assist new staff, it is hoped that experienced staff desiring to try new approaches or facing major changes in the system of state governance in which they work will find it useful as well.

The term council staff, rather than executive director, professional staff, or support staff, was chosen for use in the handbook for several reasons. The most important reason is to foster a team approach to staffing the council. The team approach encourages all staff members to have a clear sense of what the council is about and how staff fits into that picture, and to understand the various functions staff must provide. State differences make uniformity of staff structure impossible. How an executive director chooses to model individual staff responsibilities can best be determined at the state level. Furthermore, the reality for a council staff of two people is that a separation of functions into professional and support may periodically fall by the wayside to "get done what needs to get done."

What works beautifully in one state may produce a disaster in another. Not all state councils are appointed by the same type of appointing body, not all have the same resources available, not all use the same kind of fiscal agent, and not all make recommendations to state boards having the same structure and jurisdiction.

Organizational structures of state governments create differing climates in which state councils must work. The handbook attempts to clarify or point out conditions that may affect council work, how these conditions tend to influence approaches, key factors that might alert staff to their existence, and where and how they may come into play. Therefore, alternatives are given and examples of states known to have expertise in the area or who work within identified conditions are cited in parentheses as resources.

Councils usually employ professional staff who are knowledgeable about vocational education and/or employment and training. Most executive director positions are filled by persons with proven administrative skills. The handbook provides little information on these areas per se, but rather focuses on elements of those areas that have specific application to councils. Few professional staff members employed by councils have experience within state government. The maze of bureaucracy, government jargon and acronyms, regulations to regulate regulations, agencies, and protocol coupled with the task of learning about the state council mission can be overwhelming. For that reason, the handbook gives more attention to providing basic information about that area than about vocational education or administrative styles.

As council members appointed to the council change, new members will bring with them new ideas. Membership can change overnight as a result of an election. When this occurs, even an experienced staff person may feel "new" again and be in search of different approaches and methods. It is hoped this handbook will be a useful resource to these staff members.

Advice

One piece of advice that is applicable to all state council staff is to feel free to call staff in other state council offices and ask for help. Without a doubt, state council staff are more than willing to help each other. Traditionally, staffs have found time at national and regional conferences to get together. They discuss new ideas they have tried, ask for help from each other, and collectively seek approaches to resolving emerging issues.

New staffs in particular are well advised to attend these meetings. In several parts of the country, state council staff have met with other states in locations where the borders of several states touch for "rolled-up sleeve sessions" and have reported these to be helpful. Council staff serve as mentors to each other with a sense of wanting each other to succeed. Take advantage of it.

Compatible Resources

The handbook developed by the National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education (NAS/CoVE) in 1986 is available to all council offices and staff. It contains mailing lists, directories for resources, legislation, legislative summaries, definitions, acronym lists, data, and other information useful to council staff as well as members. Information in that document is not duplicated in this one. The NAS/CoVE handbook is referenced throughout and should be used in concert with this handbook.

Another valuable resource for council staff is the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). Although the state council for vocational education is not an association, the ASAE provides professional development for administration and management modes closely aligned to that of a state council. ASAE provides in-depth training sessions and certification. State associations of the ASAE are also available. Several states (Vermont, Washington, Texas, and Illinois) have found these services valuable.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (a) and (c) declares: "Each State . . . shall establish a State council, which shall be appointed by the Governor or, in case of States in which members of the State board of education are elected (including election by the State legislature), by such boards. Each State council shall be composed of 13 individuals, and shall be broadly representative of citizens and groups within the State having an interest in vocational education. . . . The State shall certify the establishment and membership of the State council at least 90 days prior to the beginning of each planning period. . . . Each State council shall meet . . . and . . . select from among its membership a chairperson who shall be representative of the private sector. . . ."

Appointments

As designated in the Perkins Act in those states having an elected state board of education, the appointments to the council are made by the board (Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Ohio). In states with an appointed board, council members are appointed by the Governor (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington).

Process

How the appointing authority goes about making council appointments varies among states. Staff needs to be aware of the process. As governors and state boards change, so may the process.

A few months before council certification is needed, staff should contact the appointing authority as a reminder of this requirement. The best approach to finding out if they wish staff assistance is to inquire if they desire any information.

State appointing authorities may ask for a variety of information. For example, they may request a summary of all current members' involvement in council activities and their attendance records. Some appoint candidates for open positions, others may ask staff for such a listing. A list of professional and trade associations through which the appointing authority may seek candidates is another common request. Some go directly to various types of industries for nominations. Some appointing authorities go to political party chairs for suggestions. Some states assure equal representation by political parties, some do not. Others may only check to be sure potential members vote.

If the appointing authority asks for staff or council assistance, they may provide it. If not, staff and council should not try to become involved. Staff may have requests from individuals, businesses, or associations about how they can get someone appointed to the council. These should be referred to the appointing authority. When staff is involved in the appointment process, caution should be taken because, if a member feels staff was responsible for his or her appointment, that member may also feel staff is responsible when he/she is not reappointed.

Term

The Perkins Act does not designate a specific tenure or rotation system for membership. Previous legislation established a 3-year term, with staggered terms, so that one-third of the members could be either replaced or reappointed annually. This is a practice retained by many appointing authorities. Laws in some states establish length of membership. In others, particularly those appointed by governors, a change in the political status of the office brings a complete change in council membership, while others may appoint a council and not change it during their time in office. State boards tend to establish staggered rotation.

Certification

It is the responsibility of the appointing authority to certify the council to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. A letter from the appointing authority stating that members have been appointed pursuant to the Perkins Act and accompanying regulations is all that is required. A compliance review may require the appointing authority to provide evidence of compliance.

Certification must be done at least 90 days prior to the beginning of each planning period described in Section 113 (a)(1). This planning period is a 3-year period, except the initial period, which was a 2-year period.

Membership

Section 112(a)(1) of the Perkins Act describes the citizen representatives to be appointed to the council. The law states they "shall be broadly representative of citizens and groups within the state having an interest in vocational education." The term "broadly" has been interpreted to mean representative by state geography, gender, racial, and ethnic groups.

In summary, the 13 members shall include the following:

Seven representatives of the private sector:

- Five from business, industry, and agriculture including--

    - one from small business
    - one member (private sector) of the state's Job Training Coordinating Council

- Two from labor

Six representatives of secondary and postsecondary vocational institutions (equitably distributed) including--

- career guidance and counseling organizations
- special populations
- special education

The Perkins Act requires that the council chair be selected from the private sector members. States are further asked to give special consideration when making council appointments with persons who serve on private industry councils or other state councils designated by federal acts.

New Member Orientation

The 13 members appointed to the state council bring 13 medleys of experience and knowledge. As new members are appointed, they bring experience and knowledge different from that of the persons they are replacing. State councils operate with varying philosophies, and states certainly possess individual differences. Nonetheless, there are a few very basic tips that may be helpful to all staff as they design orientation.

- Assess the individual orientation needs of each member.
- Provide both individualized and group orientation sessions to accommodate individual differences.
- Remember that council members are intelligent individuals. Most are experts in their fields; most have highly developed leadership skills. They may have virtually no knowledge of or experience in vocational education, but they will learn quickly.
- Do not assume anything. Be basic, but do not insult their intelligence. Don't "talk down" to them.
- Develop an orientation process that is paced or phased to avoid an "information overload."
- Think of each new member orientation as the member's first year on the council.
- Call new members after the first few meetings to ask if they have questions, would like more information, or need items clarified.

- Promote a sense of belonging and encourage active participation from the beginning.

- Do not assume that a different viewpoint is lack of knowledge. Ask questions to determine if it is a viewpoint difference, lack of knowledge, or misconception.

- Avoid trying to mold all council members into a single line of thinking.

- Be aware of the need for continuing orientation of all members, not only new members.

Orientation Format

The format selected for orienting new council members depends on the following factors:

- The number of new members. If one or two new members are appointed, staff may wish to provide individual orientation. Sometimes, four to seven new members are appointed and a small group orientation, perhaps the day before a meeting, may be best. When the entire council is new, the first meetings need to be used for orientation. Some states have found a special retreat format to be effective.

- Who provides orientation. Orientation is generally a staff responsibility. Staff assumes major responsibility for organizing and compiling materials even if council members participate.

- Involvement of council members. Council members may be involved in a variety of ways.

  - -- The council chair may wish to welcome new members and explain major activities or annual goals of the council.
  - -- The past chair may be assigned responsibility for orientation.
  - -- A "buddy system" in which experienced council members work on a one-on-one basis to assist with orientation and are available to answer questions or clarify issues has been successful in some states.
  - -- Executive committees may meet with new members for orientation purposes as well.
  - -- Committee chairs may wish to describe their activities.
  - -- Members may work in small groups to discuss various aspects of the council with new members, as in rotation sessions.

- Mix of private sector and educational representatives. Some phases of orientation may be needed by private sector representatives, but not by the educational representative. The reverse is also true. To avoid wasting a member's time, the group may be divided for these sessions. To do this, the experienced council members from the private sector may work with new educational representatives while the experienced educational representatives have a special session with the new private sector representatives.

- Time appointment is made. When council members are appointed a month or two in advance of when they actually begin to serve, options for various formats are less limited. New members may be invited to observe council or committee meetings. If appointments are made only a few days prior to a meeting, most orientation will have to follow their first meeting. Sometimes this causes new members to feel overwhelmed. It then becomes necessary to "back up" and unravel the complexities.

- Council policy. Bylaws or other policies of the council may exist that clearly define the format and process to be used in orientation.

- Appointing authority orientation. The Governor's office staff or state board staff may have been requested by the Governor or the state board to meet with newly appointed members to discuss expectations of the appointing authority. Staff may or may not be invited to attend.

When there are new council members who need orientation to the educational system (particularly vocational education), in addition to the council's role and function, involvement of local school personnel may be helpful. Staff may arrange for these members to visit or tour community colleges, vocational education centers, or vocational education departments in high schools. This same method may be used to familiarize new members with JTPA. Local SDAs and PIC members can be valuable resources.

Care should be taken in making such arrangements to be certain the local personnel involved are knowledgeable, can answer questions, don't have "an axe to grind," and understand their role in the orientation process thoroughly. This may be a service provided by your state vocational association.

Content and Process Outline

Following is a sample content and process outline describing and suggesting some ways in which to pace or use a phased-in approach for orientation. The format, scheduling, contents, and persons involved should be adjusted or adapted to meet an individual state's situation and needs.

Phase one--welcome to the council. As soon as the appointing authority makes new appointments known, the executive director will want to call each new member, welcome them to the council, and provide them with basic information about the council. Listen carefully as new members ask questions and tell you about themselves. This will be an opportunity to assess their experiences and get a sense for the kind of orientation that will be needed. The information provided in this call should be in lay language.

Steps in phase one include the following:

- Explain the basic functions of the council.
  - -- The council's overall purpose is to advise and make recommendations that will improve vocational education throughout the state.
  - -- Recommendations and advice are given to the state board of education, the Governor, the business community, the general public, and the employment and training (Job Training Partnership Act [JTPA]) community.
  - -- Councils are established by the federal law for vocational education.
  - -- Members are appointed to the council by the Governor or state board.
  - -- The 13 council members represent business and industry, labor, small business, the council for employment and training (JTPA), agriculture, and education. Representatives from education have expertise in areas such as special education, guidance, secondary and postsecondary education, and working with students having special needs.
  - -- Vocational education is offered in the state's high schools, community colleges, area vocational centers, and special centers for adults that help prepare students (youth and adults) for jobs.
  - -- The council hires staff to help them with their efforts. Staff collects information and performs administrative functions needed by the council.

- Tell them how many meetings are held each year, date of first meeting, and about how many days of their time will be needed and explain that expenses are reimbursed. Inquire if a letter to their supervisor or employer to request time away from their job is needed.

- Explain that orientation will be provided to better acquaint them with responsibilities required of the council, how the council functions, and other activities such as council committees, public hearings, and so forth.

- Let them know you will be sending them some information to review and that the chair or other members may be contacting them.

- Inquire about sending a news release announcing their appointment to the local media.

- Followup by providing them with the following--
  - -- Council membership brochure and membership directory with names and addresses. (They appreciate the pictures most states have in their membership brochures.)
  - -- Dates of council meetings if known.
  - -- Summarized lay-language version of the council mandates. (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII)
  - -- Information requested.
  - -- A "welcome letter" reiterating (briefly) the points of your phone call. Copy the letter to supervisors, employers, board chairs, and so forth as appropriate. (Send separate letter if requested.)

-- A copy of official announcements regarding appointment, if provided by the state board or governor.

Following the phone calls to all new members, the executive director will want to assess individual orientation needs and determine whether individualized or group sessions would be best for the next phase. It may be that individual sessions with one or two members for part of the next phase would be worthwhile.

If at all possible, a visit to each new member's place of employment should be scheduled at this point. The visit may serve several purposes, but the primary purpose is to get acquainted with the new member and begin developing rapport.

The visit reveals the council's interest in its members and provides a first-hand opportunity to learn more about the members' expertise and experiences. The visit (scheduled in advance) should be short (about an hour) so as not to take too much time from their work day. The lunch break may be a good time. Part of phase two of the orientation may occur at this time, or it may be better spent getting acquainted. The member may wish to take you on a tour or introduce you to co-workers or employers. If other council members live in the vicinity and can give the time, a joint visit would be a nice gesture.

If phase two is to be totally individualized, it may be necessary to schedule a 2-hour block or plan to meet before or after work so this visitation can serve that purpose.

Phase two--introduction to state council on vocational education. The initial orientation of council members to be accomplished in phase two should include visual aids, diagrams, and one-page, lay-language descriptions for future references (and note taking). Group orientation should be scheduled to coincide with a council meeting, the evening or day before. If orientation is individualized, it should be done in advance.

It is recommended that phase two be presented in two or three sessions. The sequence should be decided by the current council activities, e.g., what will they use first? The order and selection should be on an individual state basis. Some suggestions and a possible check list of topics follow:

- Introductions. Be sure all staff members are introduced and have an opportunity to tell about their work and their interests (hobbies and volunteer work are often sources of expertise).

- Staff. If the session is in the council office, be sure all staff members have a chance to get acquainted with the new members. A brief statement about how they each work with the council would be appropriate.

- Opening Remarks. Review, as four or five introductory remarks, the content described in phase one.

- Council Establishment. Describe the process by which councils are established (federal law, appointing authority, funding).

- Purpose. Discuss the overall purpose of the council.

- Autonomy. Explain the structure and policy set forth in the Perkins Act (council is certified, meet to elect chair from private sector, determine their own policies, employ staff, and so forth).

- Mandates. Review the mandated responsibilities of the Perkins Act. A lay-language version or a typed copy of the "mandates" set up in outline form may be used (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII). Avoid using photocopies of the printed Act itself. The format is continuous and difficult to follow for people who do not read legislation routinely. An abbreviated list of key words on a visual aid might be helpful for discussions and interpretations.

- Federal Reporting. Describe the relationship to the U.S. Department of Education for compliance and reporting. Include reporting responsibility to the U.S. Department of Labor. Although there are no reporting requirements to the National Council on Vocational Education, this may be an appropriate point at which to describe its mission briefly.

- Perkins Act. An overview of the Perkins Act will be necessary. Again, use an executive summary such as the one in Chapter VIII of the NAS/CoVE Handbook. The descriptive summary (also in Chapter VIII) probably has too much detail at this point, but may be useful later.

- Activities. Highlight the major on-going activities of the council and/or recent activities to give them a sense of what the council does. Public hearings, special meetings with the state board, retreats, and other annual events are examples. Provide new members with copies of council reports and newsletters as illustrations and later review.

- Committees. Distribute a list of council committees with a two or three sentence description of their major roles. List corresponding activities. Describe the structure and how it fits into the overall picture. Encourage committee chair to make this presentation.

- Plan of Work. If your council has a plan of work, it will contain activities and committee work. If it is a very detailed plan of work, a summary page highlighting its contents should be used to introduce it. The time period of the plan of work should be clear, e.g., one year, two years.

- Policies and Procedures. Bylaws and policies and procedures adopted by your state's council should be brought to the attention of new members. Distribute copies if they are not in a council handbook. A quick overview of these is all that is necessary, as they can best be absorbed when read at the member's leisure.

When it is important that the new member be familiar with some of these policies because they relate to an agenda item or activity in which the new member will be involved, staff should call the new member in advance, point out the activity and the policy that is applicable and suggest they may wish to familiarize themselves with the policy if they have not had an opportunity to do so. This may save the new member (and staff) later embarrassment.

- Coordination with Others. Highlights of how the state council works cooperatively with other organizations, agencies, associations, councils, and individuals should be mentioned. A few examples will be sufficient. Most state handbooks have a section for later reference. The NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter V may also be useful.

- Involvement. Suggest that new council members begin to think about how they will fit into the overall scheme of council activities and with what committees they may wish to work. Suggest they visit with other council members about various activities. They may want to attend some committee meetings or participate in committee conference calls before deciding. Suggest they take two or three months to decide.

- Issues/Topics. Have new members suggest several topics, areas of concern, or issues that affect vocational education. These may be economic development, technology advancement, unemployment, basic academic achievement, dropout rates, career choices, labor market information, special needs populations, and so on. Take a few minutes to discuss some of these with the new members. Their discussion will provide insight into their experiences.

- Organizational Structures/Terminology. Review a short information page including items and explanations on topics such as (1) state vocational education enrollment; (2) types of institutions delivering vocational education; (3) levels of instruction; (4) vocational/occupational/career/technical/adult education; (5) JTPA/Job Training Coordinating Council/employment and training; (6) local advisory councils; (7) state vocational education staff/state director of vocational education/state plan; (8) national vocational education staff and National Council on Vocational Education; (9) vocational education associations at state and national levels. (Chapter X of the NAS/CoVE Handbook may be helpful in compiling this.) Suggest they may want to have the Handbook with them at the first few council meetings as a reference.

- Council Finances. Describe the budget in broad terms including state and federal resources, fiscal year, budget process (member role), and major categories such as (1) personnel; (2) facilities, equipment, and supplies; (3) travel; (4) research and studies; and (5) printing.

- Travel and Reimbursement. If possible, have the staff person responsible for processing reimbursement forms explain the procedure. Have a sample form for reference plus a list of allowable expenditures, limits, required receipts, and other rules they need to know. Walk them through completing the information. Be sure they are aware of the approximate time needed to receive reimbursement payment.

- State Handbook. If your council has a state handbook, highlight its contents. (Its contents may provide the order and framework for presenting phase two information.) State handbooks are highly recommended. The NAS/CoVE Handbook may also provide useful information (Chapters V-X), particularly if your council does not have its own handbook. Explain that these sources have additional, in-depth information they will find helpful. If phase two is presented in two sessions, you may wish to hold the NAS/CoVE Handbook until the second session.

Provide new members with additional publications, past minutes, a short list of popular acronyms, and other materials for their review and use in understanding the functions of the council and their role as members. (Some of this may not be in the state council handbook.) Suggest that, if questions arise as they read through the materials, they call the office or other council members for clarification or discussion. Provide information regarding telephone charge cards and/or collect calls.

The participation of experienced council members in the orientation is helpful to new members. It provides variations in the presentation and exemplifies that all of this information will make sense. Further, it is symbolic of the level of council involvement you want to establish, e.g., the members are the council; staff assist in achieving goals.

Plan to meet with new members a few minutes after their first council meeting to clarify points or answer their questions. At the first meeting attended by new members, the chair may wish to remind experienced members to be careful about the use of jargon and acronyms. A few background statements to introduce each agenda item may also be helpful. Staff should be alert to points of clarification needed throughout the meeting.

New members should be introduced at their first meeting and be asked to tell something about their work, interests, and so on. Self-introduction gets them involved immediately. Returning council members should follow the same pattern in introducing themselves. Schedule coffee and rolls 20 minutes prior to the meeting as a "meet new members" session. It should be informal, saving formal introductions for the council meeting.

Phase three--in-depth orientation. Staff should keep in mind that council members do not deal with council activities and vocational education and training policy issues on a day-to-day basis. Council members are involved in their own line of work, which is interrupted 7-10 days for council meetings and 4-8 days for committee meetings or other council activities. Council members have to shift their thinking and rely on a great deal of recall. Council terminology and processes are not second nature to them. For this reason, staff will find orientation to be an ongoing process for all council members, not a once-a-year activity for new members.

Staff should encourage the council chair, committee chairs, and others to point out the relationship of new activities or issues to council mandates. The thrust of the Perkins Act, JTPA, or other state policy relevant to the topic may also need to be reviewed. These rationale statements can be brief, but they should establish both a framework and a point of reference. Staff should not expect council members to have instant recall of previous discussions, consensus, or actions. A few relevant notes to be used by the presentor would be helpful.

There are areas in which the council becomes involved periodically, perhaps once or twice a year or even less if the council's plan of work is based on its 2-year reporting cycle. Some of these areas will require orientation at the time they are to be addressed. An awareness level will emerge as new members review past minutes and reports. Most will develop awareness as committees report. Brief explanations may be part of a terminology list in the state's council handbook or may be presented when they are secondary to the topic.

Providing an in-depth orientation for an area that will not be on the agenda for six months or a year represents poor timing. To phase in the orientation allows council members to have the necessary comprehension by the time they need to take action. The "time to teach" theory is probably the most appropriate advice to be given for phase three or in-depth orientation.

In phase three, the definition of a new member changes. A new member is now one who has not previously been involved in a particular aspect of council activity.

Examples of the kinds of topics that are part of phase three follow with a brief explanation:

- State Plan. Because all activities of the council will be feeding into the state plan for vocational education, this area is a "natural" for phased-in orientation. It can be dealt with in natural segments.

- Funding and Funding Formulas. Orientation about vocational education funding may be provided in a variety of segments. Examples include (1) sources and appropriations of funds, i.e., state, federal, local; (2) allocations, i.e., regulations, governing how they are to be designated (and not designated) by purposes such as inservice, level, program operation, special populations, administration; (3) distribution, i.e., formula, grants, reimbursement.

- Accessibility. The topic of accessibility may be broken down into segments for orientation purposes. One segment is accessibility to programs of an individual's career choice. Other segments might be related to target populations, to rural areas, and/or urban areas, or as affected by local policies for transportation, or graduation requirements.

- JTPA. For initial orientation purposes, states have found a basic overview of JTPA with concentration on the 8 percent set-aside for education to be a good first step. Reports to the council from Job Training Coordinating Council (JTCC) representatives are effective as awareness orientation. The initial orientation is intended to help members see how their responsibility for evaluating coordination between JTPA and vocational education might be addressed.

- State JTCC. Council members who are also members of the State Job Training Coordinating Council will want to provide new members with information about the JTCC and its relationship to the State Council on Vocational Education.

- Target Populations. The first step toward orienting council members about the relevance of target populations to vocational education is to acquaint members with the types of target groups (disadvantaged, handicapped, single parents, dropouts, dislocated workers, ethnic and racial minorities, displaced homemakers, teen parents, older workers, and inmates of correctional facilities).

- Labor Market Information. The role of the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) in coordinating labor market information used by not only the state council, but also agencies and programs preparing people for employment, may best be presented by SOICC staff. If the council has a representative who attends those council meetings, that person should be asked to participate.

- NAS/CoVE. Council members who participate on committees and subcommittees of NAS/CoVE may wish to provide information to new members about the national association. Those who have attended regional and national meetings can share those experiences. The NAS/CoVE Handbook is an additional resource designed to be informative about the association, its committees, and how it functions.

Phase four--follow-through. If staff thinks of orientation as ongoing and "a time to teach," follow-through will fall into place readily. Some suggestions that may serve as reminders follow:

- Work with newly appointed members individually for the first six months, whenever possible. This can be accomplished by phone calls; lunch or breakfast meetings as staff travels through their vicinity; getting together at other functions, such as conferences to discuss council work; or meeting prior to council meetings.

- Be cognizant of their background knowledge and experience related to current council activities.

- Review agenda items with new members in mind. Call them in advance to provide them with background information other council members will have to which they have not yet been exposed. Direct their attention to materials you have given them that they may wish to review before the meeting.

- Provide them with council rationale pertinent to existing council positions on various issues (i.e., how/why did the council choose the position). If the council has an ongoing major research topic, new members may appreciate an explanation about why the council chose to study that topic.

- Suggest they keep a list of terms or issues brought to their attention about which they would like more information.
- Ask (frequently) for feedback as to the extent they feel they are getting a feel for what's going on and how comfortable they are with their involvement.
- Request suggestions for improving new member orientation, i.e., ask them to evaluate it.

Getting Members Involved

The extent to which council members take an active role in council activities depends on many factors. Perhaps the most influential factors have to do with council tradition and staff encouragement. A new member who may be feeling somewhat lost in this new venture may hesitate to take the lead when no one else is participating. The stage can very quickly be set for the staff to become the council and the members to become the rubber stamp. This section suggests ways to involve members and align activities to various situations.

Many members appointed to the council view themselves as lay people and view staff as the professionals. This may be true, but the intent of the Perkins Act is very clear. The act intends for the council to advise, recommend, consult, and so forth. It further clarifies that staff may be secured to "provide services to enable the council to carry out its [council] responsibilities." The Perkins Act is not seeking views of staff that have been verified or validated by council members; it seeks views of members.

In order to make advice and recommendations, council members must know what is going on--this requires involvement. It is the staff's job to help them get involved.

Getting members involved can be a very delicate task. Staff must be mindful that members are volunteers who have full-time jobs (in most cases). Staff must also recognize that members have reasons for accepting their appointments. Usually, that reason is founded on a sincere interest in high quality vocational education programs that can help their state's citizens be successfully employed. What you have is a group of 13 people who want to do something, but have limited time in which to do it.

As "managers" of council work and activities, staff must get members intrinsically involved with limited use of their time. There are a variety of ways to do this, but it is important to know your council members so you can best tap into their interests, expertise, and abilities.

By and large, the members representing education tend to be more available to take an active part in council activities than are private sector representatives. In part, this is because a very direct relationship exists between their jobs and the activities of the council. Their involvement provides direct professional growth opportunities for their careers. Their employers, who represent educational institutions, usually feel that through their personnel, their institution has representation on the council. Released time for member participation is considered professional courtesy. Positive impacts of the council provide direct benefits to the institution and the individual.

Educators are accustomed to the process of education. If it moves slowly where change is concerned, they understand this. On the other hand, private sector members sometimes express frustration with the process and its inherent ability to be slow in implementing change.

Private sector members may not be as free to participate in council activities as are the educators. They may be able to attend meetings, but may not be available to attend conferences, seminars, or serve as council liaison representatives to another agency or board with whom the council works because of the time commitment.

Even though private sector members may believe it is important for council members to participate in a variety of educational activities so as to be visible and well informed, they often believe the educational representatives should assume these responsibilities, in addition to serving the council, because they can profit directly. On the other hand, some private sector council members may want to represent the council at educational conferences so they can better understand what is going on and foster the partnership concept.

Generally, both the private and public sector council members want to be active members. If they are unable to miss work to attend activities, there are other forms of involvement and ways they can contribute. Encourage the use of teleconferencing for committee meetings to avoid time away from work. Some councils appoint committees by geographic location to shorten travel time for attendance at committee meetings. Staff should be alert to this, working to capitalize on individual interests and expertise in a variety of ways.

Staff may encourage council chairs to ask each council member at the beginning of the year to (1) select one outside activity that will contribute to the council's effectiveness and (2) make a commitment to provide that service to the council. This helps those members who have limitations for time away from work, because they can select their own activity and feel they are doing something for the council.

In addition to attending council and committee meetings, members can be active and get involved in many ways. Following is a listing of a variety of activities that involve council members. Some activities may traditionally have been done by staff, but perhaps a rethinking is in order if we truly subscribe to the "members are the council and staff are their employees" philosophy.

1. Public Hearings encourage members to:

   - Serve on the hearing panel
   - Prepare questions to be addressed by presenters
   - Locate facilities for hearings
   - Contact individuals to testify at hearings
   - Secure local officials to welcome participants to the hearing (chief executive officer of industry, mayor, legislator, local advisory council member)
   - Review hearing testimony and select key statements for use in council publications
   - Make arrangements for media coverage
   - Get a sponsor for "coffee break"

2. Liaison Relationship Building encourages members to:

   - Make presentations about the council and issues in vocational education to civic organizations and professional/trade associations to advise the general public
   - Represent the council at meetings of a particular group (SOICC, school board association, principals' association, state board, community college board, and so forth) with which the council works cooperatively and report council activities to the group and make regular reports back to the council
   - Represent the council as a panelist or a panel reactor at conferences
   - Distribute publications in council exhibit booths at conventions and solicit opinions on various vocational education issues from those who visit the booth
   - Help to advise the business community by preparing articles for professional and trade publications that encourage partnerships between the business community and vocational education
   - Participate on local advisory councils and private industry councils (PICs)
   - Recommend co-workers to serve on PICs and local advisory councils
   - Make awards presentations on behalf of the council

- Write letters to representatives and senators expressing their views on vocational education

- Serve as the council's representative on ad hoc committees of the state board, the state's JTCC, the governor's office and others, keeping the council apprised of the activities and soliciting council input

- Bring greetings to conferences on behalf of the state council

3. Council Publications encourage members to:

   - Assist with editing, reviewing, and providing suggestions to staff for final preparation

   - Write articles or editorials for newsletters

   - Prepare introductions, forewords, or preface material for publications, as appropriate

   - Solicit guest editorials for council newsletters

   - Distribute council publications at meetings they attend to assist in reporting to the public

4. Committee Activities encourage members to:

   - Call or send a brief list of their views in advance if they cannot attend

   - Divide responsibilities into individual tasks so members can each make a contribution and eliminate the need for several meetings

   - Set up a teleconference speaker phone for a member who cannot attend, but could participate by phone

   - Offer to hold meetings in their places of business

5. Council Meetings encourage members to:

   - Secure presenters to address special topics at council meetings

   - Offer to hold council meetings in their places of work

   - Serve as panel members to react to speakers or to ask questions for further clarification

   - Secure media coverage for topics being discussed that may be of particular interest to the public

   - Review and highlight information and reports received by the council to reduce the volume of reading required by all members

- Report on conferences attended
- Highlight information to council from their trade and professional journals

Keeping Members Involved

Once members are involved in council activities, it is essential that their interest and involvement continue. The single most important factor is that they feel their time and efforts are being used effectively.

Council meetings, like any other meetings, must have a purpose. Meetings should be scheduled to carry out the objectives of the council. If attendance dwindles, staff may wish to review the agenda for important issues, significant discussions and reports, and action items.

From time to time, staff may need to ensure that members are apprised of where a discussion is leading or why a report is being presented, e.g., how it fits into their plan of work. Pointing out its relationship to mandates or council objectives may be necessary. This is best done through the chair or various committees.

Reaching conclusions or identifying major points at the close of agenda items may be helpful to staff as they begin to prepare reports of the council. Members will recall these statements and recognize their ownership, rather than feeling it is a staff report.

Most of the suggestions for getting members involved apply to keeping them involved. Proper orientation provides them with the knowledge necessary for establishing meeting agendas that will foster interest and commitment.

Staff can further encourage member participation by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Don't represent the council at the head table or on the speaker's podium at a conference where council members are in the audience. A member should represent the council whenever possible.
- Be sure all members of the council who are present at a conference (particularly state education conferences) are introduced at a general session. Staff may have to contact the conference chair and suggest this be done.
- Have council members instead of staff serve on panels or make presentations to meetings of other groups with whom the council works cooperatively, whenever appropriate.
- Offer to assist members in preparing presentations. If they don't need or want your assistance, leave them alone! Offer to help prepare or duplicate handout materials.

- Involve members in council staff presentations and workshops when they are in the audience. Don't surprise them; talk with them in advance. If you did not know they would be in attendance, introduce them and involve them in question-answer sessions as appropriate.

- Do not represent the council if a member is available to do so.

- Have members make and receive recognition on behalf of the council.

Keeping Members Informed

Sending information to council members and keeping them informed may be two different things. A random poll of members would probably indicate that some members think they get too much information while others don't think they get enough. The best solution may be to organize information so they know what they receive (and staff knows what they have sent), why it was sent (relevancy), and what to do with it (where/how to file it). They can then decide whether or not to study it.

Keeping members informed is important, but it is also a very time-consuming activity for staff. Staff seldom have time to read carefully everything that comes into the office. Additional time for studying, summarizing, and reporting is nearly impossible. The result is that most council staff then select what is sent because members complain it's too much and they can't read it all. This is understandable. The time that members give to the council is voluntary and may detract from their own professional development.

A word about "selecting"--it can be risky. If we select materials related to specific concerns or issues being addressed by the council, we may be satisfying the "relevancy" criterion, but we are omitting information about what may be emerging or the directions being taken in other areas that may ultimately affect council initiatives. When council members have limited access to information, their focus may become narrow and short-sighted.

A second risk is the tendency toward selecting those materials that reflect staff or council position. If members are not exposed to other points of view, staff may be thought guilty of persuasion or manipulation. This omission may also cause the council to take a short-sighted position. The "other point of view" will emerge, and the council may find themselves publicly admitting they did not give consideration to all facets of the issue.

This brings us back to the concept of organizing information to facilitate council review from a time concept and a comprehensive perspective.

Four general areas of information need to be organized:

1. Routinely received informative documents such as newsletters, research studies, publications, data, and reports.

2. Information about "what's happening now," which may include legislative information, state board actions, or other information that helps

members keep up to date. The timeliness of this information is crucial.

3. Council functions, such as meetings of committees, information about forthcoming activities, hearings, and other council operations that need to be communicated to members.

4. Meeting information (see the chapter dealing with council meetings, establishing an agenda, etc., for more information).

Methods of Information Management

- Use a stamp on the outside of the envelope. Check the appropriate categories as to what is enclosed and any action required:

  -- For your information
  -- Urgent
  -- Review and respond
  -- Committee information
  -- Meeting materials

- Direct information to appropriate committee members instead of all council members.

- Establish a schedule for mailing such as once a week or every two weeks.

- Mail only meeting and committee meeting materials, distribute all other undated information at council meetings.

- Ask other groups to make direct mailing to council themselves in lieu of asking the council office to distribute materials for them. Request that the council office be included on this mailing list. The state board, special interest groups, and other agencies may have multiple copies for distribution. If the information is not dated, it can be distributed at meetings.

- Establish a file with an exact duplication and date of all information mailed to council members. Keep the file in a central location for quick reference by all staff should a council member call to discuss it. Establish separate files for materials sent to each committee or to individuals.

- Include an "information packet review" as part of each meeting agenda. Identify an appropriate council member to present highlights (not to exceed two minutes) or points of special interest for each item of information. This will help council members select materials they wish to read thoroughly at a later date and provide them with the "thrust" of information they do not read. For example, one member might review all newsletters received from associations for administrators. Their report would help to inform the council of major issues of concern to administrators and which issues administration are attempting to address. This method gets individual council members involved and provides other members with an overview of the materials they may otherwise not have time to read. It will be useful to them in selecting what they do find of special interest. If a council member suggests they take time to read it in its entirety, they may be more likely to do so. Council members tend to believe staff thinks they should read everything! It also eliminates selection risks.

- Lengthy reports such as research studies may be appropriately directed to a committee for review. Committees may review the studies as part of their committee report and suggest that parts of the report would be of interest to other council committees. Executive summaries may be provided to all members.

- Reports of the State Councils on Vocational Education are often shared with other states. A council member review as for other mail items may be used or reports may be displayed for members to examine before meetings or at breaks.

- Organize packets of information by purpose. If the council has a state handbook, packets of information should be organized around the handbook sections so they can be inserted easily. If not, the following may suggest structure:

  - -- Materials requiring a review and response
  - -- Materials related to meeting agenda
  - -- Materials of a general nature such as national studies (A Nation at Risk)
  - -- Materials pertinent to council mandate (identify the mandate)
  - -- Materials related to recent council activities, presentations, positions, and so on

- Clip or band materials or use colored paper to separate and indicate the type of information, where it fits in the handbook, or possible later use.

- Attach cover notes or memos summarizing the content. This is time consuming for staff. The "information packet review" eliminates most of this.

- Provide summaries of major studies that are prepared by others. These are often available and reduce the volume of information as well as photocopying and postage expense. Chapter VI in the NAS/CoVE Handbook has several summaries of national studies.

- Indicate whether materials should be placed in their state handbook (note what section), brought to the next meeting, or held for future reference.

COUNCIL STAFF

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, Section 112(e) indicates: "Each State council is authorized to obtain the services of such professional, technical, and clerical personnel as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions under this act and to contract for such services as may be necessary to enable the Council to carry out its evaluation functions, independent of programmatic and administrative control by other State boards, agencies, and individuals."

Staff Organization

State councils have been created by the Perkins Act, and they are authorized to employ the staff to serve them and carry out mandated responsibilities. The manner in which state councils have chosen to do this differs. Procedures chosen by the councils to fulfill their mission, the size of the state, and financial resources are major reasons for these variations. Having enough personnel time to accomplish everything has been a problem plaguing state councils since they were established. A review of states reveals that various staff patterns are used. A discussion of these follows with examples of states using these patterns shown in parentheses.

Single Professional Position

The most common staffing among state councils is an executive director and a secretary (Arizona, Kansas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Kentucky, Nevada, and Oregon).

Multiple Professional Positions

States having more than one professional staff person follow two general models. The first has an assistant or associate executive director (Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, and Arkansas). The second and most common of the two models has a research, evaluation, or program specialist (Ohio, Florida, Hawaii, New Mexico, Texas, and Pennsylvania). The two models are sometimes combined in states with more than two professional staff positions (California and New York).

Professional Plus Paraprofessional Positions

Increasingly, state councils are employing the services of the paraprofessional or technician. The position is often called "administrative assistant" (Iowa). Most states using this pattern have opted for the paraprofessional who also doubles as secretary (Oklahoma, Georgia, Montana, Missouri, Rhode Island, and Colorado). This pattern is most used by states having only one professional position, the executive director. However, the paraprofessional position is also emerging in states having more than one professional position.

In-house Contracting

In-house contracting for services of both professional and support staff is a method used by councils to add expertise and/or additional personnel to handle peak work loads. Contracting may be done on a short-term basis, or an ongoing, renewable contract may be used to provide specific services (Kansas, Ohio, and Michigan). In-house contracts that expand staff by providing personnel to work under the direct supervision of the executive director (or other designated staff person) require supervision time, but do offer an opportunity for daily input and management of the service being provided.

A short-term contract may employ personnel to perform such one-time services as the following:

- Collecting data and reviewing studies pertinent to a specific topic of interest to the council
- Designing survey instruments
- Compiling data from questionnaires
- Writing public hearing results
- Conducting a small research study or telephone surveys
- Typing major reports

A contract may be written to provide services needed several times during the contract period. The jobs to be done may require intermittent attention and varying job competencies or skills, and may be more efficiently provided through part-time personnel who are contracted to target the task. Examples include the following:

- Preparing monthly/quarterly newsletters
- Conducting an annual series of public hearings
- Providing clerical services as needed
- Writing council position statements
- Directing annual council planning sessions
- Preparing mass mailings

Vendor Contracting. The use of vendors to conduct studies and research for state councils can be helpful in fulfilling the council's responsibilities. Vendors who have a ready staff to conduct and report research may be more effective and efficient than using council resources. Such contracts are not under the direct supervision of council staff, but are usually monitored by staff and/or a council committee. Private research or consulting firms, universities, or other public agencies may provide the service.

Internships. Internships not only provide additional staff to assist councils, but also provide opportunities for individual professional development. Existing internship programs are available for governmental agency personnel development in some states. Councils may wish to tap this resource. Internships may be offered as part of university programs, particularly for advanced degrees. Council-sponsored internships have also been used. One must keep in mind that internships are designed to be learning experiences and require a commitment of council staff time. Internships are generally for a short period such as a summer, a semester, or a year (Minnesota, Florida, and Illinois).

Job Descriptions

Each council staff position, whether professional or support staff, should have job descriptions on file. Staff members should be fully apprised of their own job descriptions and be involved at least annually in their updating. Staff members should also be knowledgeable about all job descriptions in order not only to improve their understanding of council office functions, but also to increase their appreciation of the contributions of co-workers. (See chapter on Policies, Procedures, and Practices for more information.)

Responsibility for Staffing

The employment of an executive director is the responsibility of the council. Generally, the council designates a committee to select the executive director. The executive director is usually responsible for selecting all other personnel whose positions are authorized or established by the council. Some council bylaws may require concurrence with the council.

It is not uncommon for councils to ask retiring executive directors to assist them with the logistics of employing a new executive director. It is imperative that proper hiring practices be followed. Personnel policies of the council should delineate the procedures. (See chapter on Policies, Procedures, and Practices.)

Council staff are employees of the council. They are not council members. Staff have responsibility for administration and office operations. Council members set policy and determine the philosophy by which staff will perform their jobs.

Staff Evaluation

Evaluation of staff or job performance reviews are for the purpose of improving staff performance. The council has responsibility for evaluating the executive director. The executive director is responsible for the evaluation of staff or may designate this responsibility depending on how the council staff is organized.

The logistics of staff evaluation vary among states and may change within a state as the membership and officers change. Pointers gleaned from several councils follow.

Content of Evaluations

- Focus on individual job descriptions.
- Formulate "job goals" or individual staff development plans for the staff person. (Goals or plans should be followed up periodically and be part of subsequent evaluations.)
- Provide for self-evaluation as part of the evaluation process.
- Identify strengths as well as areas for improvement.
- State employees' contributions to the council's mission in addition to administrative, managerial, clerical, research, public relations, and other skills and competencies specifically needed for individual jobs.
- Verify work that was done well, as well as validate or document poor work.
- Ask for suggestions to improve staff's collective contributions to council efforts.

Process of Evaluations

- Personnel matters are handled in executive sessions of the council.
- Staff members should be aware of the areas on which they will be evaluated. If specific forms or points are used, these should be available to staff.
- Evaluation of the executive director is generally conducted by a designated person or committee of the council. The chair and past chair are most often the designated individuals. Some councils have a personnel committee that assumes the responsibility, but most frequently the executive committee is designated.

- The chair (or past chair) may work in consultation with the executive committee or provide the evaluation and submit it to the executive committee for concurrence.

- The full council should be apprised of the evaluation in general terms. It is generally agreed that the conduct of an evaluation by the full council is not a recommended practice. If the members wish to express either specific concerns or recommendations to the executive director, these should be handled in executive session with the council's consensus presented to the individual by the member responsible for the process.

- The executive director reports to the council when staff evaluations have been completed. Because staff are the responsibility of the executive director, the content need not be discussed in specific terms. For example, the director may state that all staff received satisfactory evaluations and that job goals for each staff person have been cooperatively set. The executive director may wish to expand on a few commendations given each staff person or apprise the council if problems with personnel appear to be imminent.

- Grievance procedures established in personnel policies should be carefully followed if a grievance arises. (See chapter on Practices, Policies, and Procedures.)

Staff Salary

Staff salary and fringe benefits are determined by the state council. Periodically, a voluntary survey of staff salaries and fringe benefits is conducted. Summary tables report anonymous information about the salaries of council staff. The information may or may not be helpful in working with the council to establish staff salaries and benefits.

The area of salaries should be carefully reviewed when selecting a fiscal agent. Regulations governing salaries of that agency may have to be passed along to the salaries of the council staff. Retirement programs, insurance, and others may be determined by the fiscal agent. Changes in fiscal agents could be detrimental to retirement programs of tenured staff. (See chapter on Council Finances.) Required salaries may be beyond the council's fiscal ability or may be too low to attract qualified personnel for the council.

A number of alternative methods for determining staff compensation are used. Because most people want knowledge of their earning potential, staff may wish to encourage the council to establish a system or process for determining staff salaries. When discussing salaries with council members, several philosophies emerge. These philosophies vary because of the individuality of members, but also because of the state's attitude toward salaries of public employees.

In examining the line of thinking inherent in philosophies related to salaries, one may expect to find any of the following:

- o Salaries of council staff should be similar to the salaries of persons with whom they interact on the job.
- o Staff salaries should be higher than salaries of their counterparts to give staff clout.
- o Staff salaries should be lower than their counterparts to avoid unnecessary resentments.
- o Staff salaries should be comparable to salaries of similar public service jobs, years of experience, qualifications, and/or educational attainment.
- o Staff salaries should be higher than salaries of similar public service jobs in order to attract the best personnel.

Nearly all states have adopted a system for determining staff salary. A few, particularly those having only an executive director and a secretary, do not have a formal process. In those states, a salary was simply established and the council gives merit or cost of living raises as they deem appropriate. The more formal approaches used by the majority of the councils include the following:

- o Salary steps or grades with periodic increments based on tenure or educational attainment
- o Salary ranges with merit and/or cost of living increases determined by the council
- o Salary steps for support personnel and salary ranges for professional personnel
- o Fringe benefit packages that are delineated in personnel policies or as part of the salary schedules

Staff Credibility

Staff acquires its credibility through demonstrated competence and efficiency, as well as from the council itself. In turn, the staff provides the council with much of its credibility. The effectiveness of the council and its staff is closely aligned with whether or not their audiences and the general public have confidence in them.

All staff members have a responsibility for establishing good public rapport and a positive council image. The executive director has a crucial leadership role to play in this regard. The credibility of staff as perceived by the public, as well as by council members themselves, has a direct impact on council efficiency and effectiveness.

High standards for job performance and productivity, plus the positive work ethic of staff, should be apparent to both council members and the public. Good lines of communication between staff and council are essential. The efficiency level of staff may be raised substantially by having both members and staff who are knowledgeable of various staff functions.

It is imperative that staff understand their roles in communication with members directly or through the executive director or other designee. For example, staff members will communicate about personnel policies and salaries through the executive director, not directly with council members and vice versa. On the other hand, a staff person responsible for handling paperwork for council travel expense reimbursements would be in direct communication with council members for that purpose.

COUNCIL FINANCES

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (f)(2) states: "The expenditure of the funds . . . is to be determined solely by the State council for carrying out its functions under the Act, and may not be diverted or reprogrammed for any other purpose by any State board, agency, or individual. Each State council shall designate an appropriate State agency or other public agency, eligible to receive funds under this Act, to act as its fiscal agent for purposes of disbursement, accounting, and auditing."

Fiscal Agent

The selection of a fiscal agent is determined by the council itself. Council staff is responsible for finding potential fiscal agents and reporting their findings and, upon request, their recommendations to the council. Several alternatives are available, and several factors need to be considered in making the choice. Each offers unique advantages and disadvantages. Following are examples of some alternatives:

- University or community college (Nebraska)
- Local school district or area vocational center
- State agency (the state board of education is most common, but it can be any agency)
- State treasurers (Kansas)
- State councils (North Carolina and Minnesota)

When a state or other public agency agrees to be a council's designated fiscal agent, it may be necessary for the council to adhere to the regulations and policies of that agency in matters pertaining to fiscal management, personnel, and other operating practices. State codes governing the agency may impose additional rules and regulations that will ultimately affect the council. Staff should be fully apprised of any such conditions and be certain to communicate these to the council.

The selection of a fiscal agent is an important activity of the state council. Regulations of the agency should be fully explored. Some are extremely time consuming, others could cause a council to lose control of hiring staff, deciding how many staff are needed, or carrying out other activities deemed necessary. In seeking potential fiscal agents, the staff will want to investigate the following:

- How paper work flows
- Forms and time frames for travel reimbursement of your council members and staff
- Signature authority, delegation
- Bidding procedures, minimums, purchases, vouchers
- Handling of bids, turnaround time
- Approval of out-of-state travel (would council travel be frozen if the agency travel is frozen?)
- Billing for conferences, to avoid large cash outlays for members and staff
- Indirect costs to be charged, on what line items
- Record keeping and accounting services
- Audit, council responsibilities, audit reports, schedules
- Personnel vacancy announcements and interviewing
- Limitations for mileage, lodging, other travel expenses
- Disposition of furniture and old equipment purchased with federal funds
- Personnel policies, extension to council staff
- Use of agency equipment (audiovisual, photocopying, printing, furniture)
- Salary and fringe benefit ranges for staff if they must adhere to these

Office Facilities and Equipment

State council offices are usually located in the state's capital city. Councils generally choose the state's capital for closer proximity to other governmental agencies with whom councils work.

Exceptions have been based on location of fiscal agent or a more central location within state boundaries or population densities. In some cases, state council offices were originally located in places other than the capital and, being successful, have simply remained there.

Most councils recommend that council offices be located apart from offices of the state board. Rationale for this is that when located in the same facility, councils are often thought to be part of that agency, thus losing long-sought autonomy.

Selecting a Location

Acquisition of office space is an administrative function and should be the responsibility of staff. The council may choose to discuss and agree upon characteristics or criteria for the office location and provide direction to staff, or they may prefer to have staff recommend a location for council approval.

In making a recommendation to the council, staff will want to note the financial burdens and describe attributes of the office that will contribute to council goals and office efficiency, such as accessibility to the public, potential to share equipment, proximity to other offices, and available space for meetings. Because the "perfect office" probably cannot be found, staff should not hesitate to be candid about compromises that have to be made with their recommendations.

In seeking facilities for the council office, the following may be options:

- Private or commercial rental property
- State property
- City or county property
- Property subleased from fiscal agent
- Property subleased from another agency or organization
- Shared suite with another association, council, or organization
- Free or low cost space provided by the fiscal agent

Proper attention to office selection may provide fringe benefits that will enhance the efficiency of staff or provide cost savings to the council budget. Consider such points as the following:

- Staff parking and loading facilities
- Accessibility to the public (i.e., can people "drop in" easily)
- Accessibility to the handicapped
- Space for committee meetings
- Space for council meetings
- Potential for sharing equipment with other offices (copy machines, audiovisual equipment)
- Storage for supplies, central storage for files

- Privacy of executive director's office
- Work space for support staff
- Access to public transportation
- Potential for sharing reception area or telephones with other offices
- Parking for council members and/or others attending meetings in council office
- Walking and/or driving time required (proximity) to reach offices of groups or individuals with whom staff work on a day-to-day basis (fiscal agent, state board, governor's office, and so on)
- Extra expenses for maintenance, routine cleaning, parking, and meeting rooms

There are many factors of a less tangible nature that need to be considered when selecting a council office. State differences are the critical factors involved in these issues. The differences are more philosophical than organizational and may include the following:

- Public Image. The office itself may be the image the general public has of the council, thus the appearance and decor become considerations.
- Associated with the Company We Keep. Some states have found that being closely located to another agency, particularly if it is the state board, causes the public to think of the council as part of that agency. For some, it is important to dispel this concept. As a result, some councils have chosen to relocate and have selected locations that are out of the mainstream of state agencies. Time efficiency associated with proximity and accessibility to drop-ins may be sacrificed; thus, some councils have reversed this action and relocated in the mainstream.
- State-of-the-Art for State agencies. A council needs to consider how crucial it is to adhere to the "state-of-the-art" for state agency offices and furnishings. Criticism that could jeopardize credibility and rapport may be a costly consequence.
- Humanistic Concerns. Councils' staffs are small in numbers with the majority of the councils having only an executive director and a secretary. For these offices, careful thought should be given to isolated or one-office facilities. Although it may be efficient not to have drop-ins and traffic, the jobs can be lonely if there is no one with whom to share ideas.

Selecting Equipment

State council offices are reaping the benefits of such technological developments as word processing, computers, online communications networking, and expanded teleconferencing capabilities to offset their inability to finance secretarial and other staff positions. Although capital outlay may be initially large, these investments are becoming essential.

Councils are choosing to make investments in office equipment in a variety of ways. Some purchase, others lease or rent, and some have found time-sharing to be efficient.

Improvements in tape recording devices have been beneficial in council meetings and public hearings; this method may soon be replaced by videotaping.

Providing office equipment is an administrative function. Whether leased, rented, or purchased, large investments will usually need some kind of council approval, either as a budget item or a specific approval. Actual brand or model selections should be a staff decision.

Staff should research the advantages and benefits carefully before proposing major equipment acquisition. An often overlooked area for research is the job description area. Staff of councils having only an executive director and a secretary (which are the majority) should analyze this area carefully.

For example, the theory that says "the most cost-effective means of assigning work is to assign it to the lowest salaried staff person capable of performing the job" may be a key selling point to councils when they realize that the executive director is hand tallying a survey because the secretary is busy collating and stapling papers. A copy machine that collates and staples frees a secretary to enter survey data into a computer so the director can analyze the findings.

The increased requirements of state councils mandated by the Perkins Act are causing councils to take a hard look at how their offices function. The result has been an upgrading of equipment.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act; Section 112 (c) states: "The time, place, and manner of meeting . . . shall be provided by the rules of the State council, except that such rules must provide for not less than one public meeting each year at which the public is given an opportunity to express views concerning the vocational education program of the State."

Regular Meetings

Number of Meetings

The number of meetings held by each state council varies. Some states have found monthly meetings to be necessary while others function adequately with quarterly meetings. The practice of the majority is 7-10 meetings per year. Factors influencing the number of council meetings include whether meetings are one or two days in length, geographic size of the state, funds for travel, council bylaws, and council practices related to the use and functions of committees and the executive committee between meetings.

Meeting Dates

Some state councils have found that a pre-established day of the week and week of the month improves attendance by both members and guests. Other states have successfully scheduled council meetings according to their plan of work. Council meetings are scheduled to coincide with needed council actions. Another system has been to select days based on the dates available on council members' calendars.

Scheduling council meetings to "piggyback" on other meetings may eliminate required travel time and time away from work for members. It may also increase the audience attending council meetings and council visibility to other groups.

Establishing meeting dates is a council responsibility. Staff may propose a meeting schedule. Some discussion and agreement on the scheduling process should occur each year. The ability of council members to be available for council meetings should be carefully considered. A few councils have scheduled weekend meetings to help members who find that it is difficult to miss work.

Meeting Location

A variety of meeting locations are selected by the states. An essential consideration in selecting meeting sites is accessibility to the handicapped. If during a meeting the council and its guests will be touring facilities or requiring overnight lodging, provisions to accommodate special needs of individuals should be made. Special invitations or standard meeting notices to the public should inquire whether or not accommodations for handicapping conditions will be needed.

Following are examples of locations frequently selected by state councils for meetings:

- Council office
- Schools, vocational centers, and so forth
- Community college and university campus
- Privately owned businesses
- High-tech industries
- City or county offices and facilities
- Hotel/motel meeting rooms
- Service Delivery Area (SDA) offices and facilities
- Government (state or federal) agency facilities

Moving meetings around the state will help to equalize travel distances for members. Having meetings in different geographic areas of the state increases accessibility to the members of the public who may wish to attend.

The cost of renting meeting space may influence location decisions. Public facilities are generally available at no cost.

Holding meetings in schools or private industries may provide an opportunity for council members to tour facilities and observe vocational education or private sector training first hand. It may also be conducive to hearing from key leaders in education or the business community about their training needs.

Public Meeting Laws

Council staff will want to be knowledgeable of laws pertaining to public meetings. Laws may require special meeting notices to the public and the media, advance availability of the agenda, minutes, opportunity for public input, posting notices of action items, or other procedures requiring careful attention. (See also the Public Meetings/Hearings section of this chapter.)

Preparing the Agenda

Some ideas and suggestions for preparing agenda and supplemental information include the following:

- Staff usually drafts the meeting agenda and then discusses it with the chair. In drafting the agenda, review bylaw requirements, previous minutes and agenda, committee and ad hoc committee minutes, and plan of work.
- Include an oral report of conferences, committee participation, and other activities of council members. These may include reports of activities of various agencies and organizations with which the council works in a liaison capacity.
- Identify agenda items as (1) information, (2) receive, or (3) action items.
- Provide a statement concerning each agenda item to clarify expectations of council members or remind them of previous discussions.
- Identify council person (or committees) responsible for agenda item.
- List name and title of presenters for items involving persons other than council members.
- When mailing agenda to members, highlight or mark each council member's name and responsibility.
- Note time allotments for each item.
- Leave space for note taking.
- Number supplement information or meeting materials to correspond with agenda item number. Mark agenda items to indicate that supplemental information is included.
- Staple or use binders to keep meeting materials in order and avoid paper shuffling during the meeting.
- Separate information not related to the meeting from meeting information. (Separate folder, distribute at end of meeting, or highlight during staff report.)
- Summarize lengthy information and attach as a cover to the original (identify as summarized).
- Attach committee and/or staff recommendations (or suggested alternatives) at beginning of information material. Note source of recommendations or suggestions. Indicate on the agenda that these are provided.

- Mail agenda and supplemental information to council members at least 10 days in advance.

- Note that supplemental information is available upon request when mailing the agenda to individuals other than council members (cost of postage for packets may be prohibitive) or prepare a summarized agenda showing the topic and presenter only for mass distribution.

- Have extra agendas and packets available for guests at the meeting. Materials for individuals who attend regularly should be prepared with their names or agencies. Information of the council is public information (except for specific information related to personnel matters).

Conduct of the Meeting

Each council chair brings a new style or flavor to council meetings. Likewise, council chairs vary in the way they work with staff and what they expect from staff concerning planning and handling council meetings.

Prior to each council meeting, staff should "walk through the agenda" with the chair. An agenda review will help the chair to anticipate discussion, be knowledgeable of each topic, be able to direct questions, and keep the meeting moving. Topics that have the potential for being controversial will be on the agenda from time to time. In some cases, the controversy will be among council members, in other cases, controversy may come from the audience or from a panel of presenters. It is the staff's responsibility to apprise the chair of such potential.

Councils have varying policies and practices for participation of their audiences in council meeting discussions. These policies and practices should be clear to members and guests. Most state councils follow one of the following four:

- Only council members participate in discussion of the issue.

- Council members discuss the issue, but ask for comments from guests at a designated time.

- Guests actively participate with council members in all discussion.

- Council members discuss the issue and invite specified guests (usually presenters or resource people) to comment, cite their perspective, or answer specific questions.

Committee/Member Reports

Prior to council meetings, staff should review the agenda and communicate with members or committee chairs who will be making reports. The purpose of the communication is to clarify time frames, topics, and documents to be presented, as well as to offer assistance if it is needed. Staff should inquire or suggest, as appropriate, about supporting materials that may be useful if included in meeting packets or about any special arrangements (such as audio-visual equipment) that may be needed.

Presentations to the Council

Presentations at council meetings may assist the council in collecting information it needs to fulfill the mandated responsibilities. Staff are responsible for making certain that those who report or present focus remarks on areas of specific concern to the council. A variety of strategies may be used to accomplish this. The council may have an adopted policy or a traditional practice which establishes guidelines.

It is important the presenters be apprised of what role they are to play. The role may be to provide any of the following:

- New information
- Clarification
- Data, facts, figures
- Progress report
- Research or study
- Reaction to another report
- Pros and/or cons of an issue
- Discussion with members
- Viewpoints

Presenters should be given advanced information about the council, its membership, and what its major responsibilities include. This is important because those who are not familiar with education or vocational education per se generally make two assumptions. First, they assume the council is composed entirely of educators and secondly, they will assume that all programs are either secondary or postsecondary, usually determined by a personal experience.

In working with presenters, staff should inform them of council activities and information related to their topic. If the topic is multi-faceted or a two-sided issue and the council dealt with another portion of it at a previous meeting, the presenter should be informed. Presenters need to know "where the council is coming from" (i.e., why they are concerned, how they will use the information).

A list of topics (or concerns) or guide questions are "musts" for presenters. The listing should also provide the presenter with the perception the council is seeking. For example, does the council want the presenter to address a topic in terms of identifying the problem or presenting possible solutions. If a presenter begins by saying "I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be talking about," chances are that staff failed to fulfill its responsibilities.

Preparation of topics or guide questions can be handled in a variety of ways. The basic rule is that presentations to the council must have a purpose that relates to the council's overall plan of work so it can assist the council in fulfilling its responsibilities. Programs that entertain or are simply "interesting" have no place on the agenda. Presentations that are not well planned in advance will appear to be "just interesting." In preparing presenters, consider identifying topics or issues the presenter is to address by the following means:

- Staff can prepare a list or identify questions and discuss these with the presenter. A follow-up letter should reiterate the points.
- The council committee that is seeking the information may identify major points needed in the presentation and request staff to communicate the information.
- The council may identify the major issues and ask staff to relay their interests and concerns.
- The council may adopt a procedure such as "the interrogator panel" (Ohio) or reaction panel who will develop a list of specific questions to ask the presenter. Presenters should be made aware of this in advance and direction must still be given to the presenter.

The latter suggestion is very successful with presenters who are known to stray from the issue. Controversial topics can sometimes best be addressed by state employees when this method is used.

Staff is responsible for writing thank-you letters to presenters. Sending copies to their supervisors, superintendents, boards, etc. helps to create positive public relations for the council.

Meeting evaluation. A simple evaluation form that can be used for council meetings, committee meetings, or other council activities may provide staff with information about the organization and administration of the event. It also may help staff determine the members' perceptions regarding certain issues. It needs only a few short questions, such as (1) What was the most valuable agenda item today?; (2) How should staff follow through?; (3) What was the most important action taken?; and (4) What information from the meeting should be referred to committees of the council for further study?

Meeting attendance. Staff should pay particular attention to member attendance at meetings. If the average attendance does not fall within the 11-13 per meeting range, staff should try to determine why. The age-old adage "busy people will find time to do what they want to do" holds true for council members.

Poor attendance is most likely to be the result of poorly conducted meetings or of members not being adequately involved and not having a sense that the council is accomplishing anything.

Teleconferencing. Staff should be alert to the use of advanced technology. The teleconference may allow members to participate in committee meetings as well as council meetings when they are unable to attend. Committee meetings can be conducted quickly with minimum expenditure of funds for travel and greatly reduced time away from the office. Council members are generally pleased when staff are cognizant of their limited time for traveling to and from meetings and, as taxpayers, of the expenses for traveling. Teleconferences have been successfully used for public hearings in some states. Colorado is one example.

Public Meetings/Hearings

The Perkins Act calls for "a public meeting in lieu of a public hearing." Most councils use the term hearing, some use forum, and others use town meeting. The terminology selected may be based on state laws that come into play if a certain term is selected. Staff is advised to look into this if the council is considering changing terminology or structure and process traditionally used.

Planning

Whether a state council elects to adopt policy regarding its public hearing is not particularly important, but some guidelines, if nothing more than a checklist, should be developed. Public hearings do not just happen. Planning and organization are essential.

Public hearings are activities in which you can expect active involvement from the members. The public hearing may be the council's most visible moment. The public image of the council can be quickly destroyed by a poorly conducted hearing. In addition to the logistics, attention needs to be given to the conduct of the meeting. If it has been publicized as a hearing on a specific topic and the hearing panel engages in off-the-subject discussions or is unprepared to ask probing questions, the image may be "they don't know what they are doing." Anticipating and coping with problems is discussed more thoroughly later.

Once the decision has been made to hold a public hearing, its purpose should be clearly defined in order for the council to receive maximum, quality input in relation to the council's expenditure of time, energy, and money. Although the major work load (administration) will rest with staff, council members should be intrinsically involved in establishing objectives for the hearings.

If the only purpose is to satisfy the requirement of the Perkins Act for "not less than one public meeting each year," the results will probably have little value. The public hearing can serve the council as a strategy or mechanism for carrying out its plan of work if it is part of that plan. In addition to providing the council with "public input," hearings may provide resource information needed by the council and create public interest in council initiatives.

Public hearings or meetings may be designed so as to fulfill the following purposes:

- Collecting information about how the public views vocational education in general
- Collecting information about how the public views a specific segment of vocational education
- Assisting the council in collecting information that will be helpful in carrying out its plan of work, mandates, committees activities, etc.
- Forming the basis for determining future council initiatives
- Assisting other groups who work with vocational education in collecting information and seeking solutions
- Being informative to those who attend as observers

The Perkins Act requires that "the public is given an opportunity to express views concerning vocational education programs of the State." This statement implies an "openness" of the topic. The experience of most councils that have simply advertised that they are "conducting a hearing to get the views of the public about vocational education" has been poor attendance and a conglomeration of input that lacked direction. For these reasons, councils have tended to provide suggested issues or requested input on more specific topics. By doing this, the information becomes more manageable and usable.

To get a more open-ended response from the public, the hearing can have a segment of time at which the general public is urged to address its own concerns and interests. In addition, most public meeting laws of the states require a time on the council agenda when the public can address the council with its views.

When a hearing is to be open-ended, the council may wish to establish some general guidelines, such as asking participants to address their concerns and interests by including information such as the following:

- Identify the concern or recommendation.
- Explain why you are concerned, whom it affects (impact of the problems or positive results).
- Discuss or describe "what should be" (desired outcome).
- Suggest possible solutions or expansions.

Hearings need not generate more problems. It is important that councils hear and solicit positive as well as negative viewpoints if the picture is to be balanced.

Areas that are interrelated and need to be determined up front may be decided by asking the following questions in order to bring focus to the purpose of the hearing as a means of deriving its objectives:

- What does the council want to have addressed? (topic)
- Who should address it? (audience)
- How should it be addressed? (format)
- Where should it be addressed? (location)
- When should it be addressed? (time/date)
- Why should it be addressed? (use)

The interrelationship of these six areas is important. Each must be carefully considered and determined as it relates to the others. If proper attention is not given, the focus of a hearing may take a different direction than intended. A brief discussion and listings of alternative options for each of these areas follow.

Topics

The list of topics that can be addressed at a public hearing is neverending. Some ideas for selecting those topics may be useful. Usually, the need for a public hearing emerges through committee planning or as the council establishes its program of work.

A public hearing is a strategy that can be used by the council to reach an objective. Staff may want to keep the concept of a public hearing before the council as they determine strategies for reaching their objectives. If the council asks staff to design the strategies, then staff will want to be mindful of its usefulness. A review of the planned activities of the council or its committees will identify possible hearing topics.

If the council chooses to make the public hearing an event and is seeking possible topics or issues aside from its own activities, some of the resources that follow may be useful. A public hearing organized around this process is helpful in identifying future issues the council may wish to address, instead of using the hearing as a means of reaching a specific objective.

Resources for identifying topics include the following:

- Staff could list pertinent issues as suggestions to the council.

- Council committees could identify topics aligned with their planned activities.
- Recipients of council advice and reports could be asked to suggest topics for public hearings that would be useful to them (i.e., state board, governor, JTCC, educational community).
- Council might compile list of possible topics from which to select.
- The council's plan of work might be reviewed for appropriate topics.
- Mandates of the Perkins Act to the state council could become a pertinent hearing topic.

Alternatives for organizing the council's choice of topics into the public hearing process may take any of the following structures:

- Open Topic. Participants address any topic related to preparing citizens for employment they wish to discuss.
- Specific Topics. The council identifies a specific topic about which it wishes to hear the views of the public or receive input from the public.
- Multiple Topics. The council selects more than one topic or issue, but still provides parameters for the hearing.
- Combination. The council may choose to have the morning session of the hearing focus on specific or multiple topics and have an open topic session in the afternoon.

Below is a laundry list of a few possible hearing topics. These items would need additional clarification to determine if they were to address policy or administrative process or simply be informative and idea-generating in nature. They are presented to suggest the potential of scope.

- Employer satisfaction with vocational education graduates
- Desired worker characteristics expressed by employers or supervisors
- Cooperative ventures between labor and vocational education
- State barriers to local coordination and/or delivery
- Apprenticeship programs
- Vocational education in correctional facilities
- Accessibility to target populations, particularly handicapped
- Exemplary initiatives serving targeted populations

- Enhancing utilization of facilities
- Special funding needs
- Labor's benefits from vocational education
- Services and activities not provided by vocational education
- Inservice education needs of teachers
- State plan for vocational education
- Success stories of vocational education graduates
- Governance
- Single parent programs for teenagers
- Integrating academic skills and vocational education skills
- Cooperative initiatives of special education and vocational education
- Parental views of vocational education
- Graduation requirements
- Tracking students
- "Creaming"
- Improving vocational education and JTPA coordination
- Facilitators and barriers to partnerships
- Employer expectations
- Vocational education's delivery system
- The workplace in the year 2000
- Literacy
- Vocational education's responsibility to the adult worker
- Vocational education's image and credibility
- Benefits of private sector involvement
- Serving gifted students in vocational education
- Licensing regulations

- State-of-the-art needs of various occupational service areas--agriculture, home economics, business, industrial education, health occupations
- Impact of vocational education student organizations on leadership development
- Innovative techniques for teachers in service
- Use of local advisory councils
- Vocational education's role in economic development
- State's use of program improvement and research funds
- Needed model programs
- The changing work force
- Dropout prevention
- Updating equipment
- Acknowledging academic skills in vocational education's curriculum for credit
- Career education--when do we begin
- Distribution of state and federal funds for vocational education
- State's plan for educating and preparing its citizens for employment
- Educational basics for high technology
- Career guidance and counseling programs
- Use of individualized career plans
- Competency-based education
- Incentives for private sector involvement in vocational education programs
- Urban and/or rural-based problems facing vocational education delivery
- Vocational education's role in worker productivity
- Impact of funding cutbacks
- Uses for increased funds

- SDA utilization of educational programs for delivery of JTPA services
- The role of secondary education
- Teacher preparation programs
- Status of vocational education's curriculum
- Role of the state board for vocational education
- Program articulation
- Impact of declining enrollment
- Vocational education's ability to provide a well prepared work force
- Management trends in the work force
- Industry-based training
- Improving the vocational education delivery system
- Serving pocket areas of the state
- Transfer of credits
- Advanced placements
- Perceptions of vocational education by former students
- Educational barriers to quality vocational education delivery
- Education and training systems needed to keep pace with the changing world of work
- Vocational education's contribution to excellence in education
- Teaching employability skills, work ethic, job seeking skills
- Coordination of programs and services for adults
- Vocational education's role in preparation and support of entrepreneurs
- Communication between PICs and local advisory councils
- Unavailable services
- Emerging occupations
- Open-entry, open-exit delivery
- State taxes for vocational education

Audiences

The audiences being sought by state councils to present their views to the council vary from state to state. The focus of the hearing will, for the most part, dictate the audience. Some possible audiences from which to solicit input follow. A combination of several may be desired.

Private Sector Audiences

- Organized labor
- Small business/industry
- Large business/industry
- Employers of former students
- Local advisory council members
- Employers who have not employed vocational education graduates
- Dislocated workers, workers in need of retraining
- Displaced homemakers
- Persons employed in nontraditional work
- Entrepreneurs
- Selected workers (i.e., personnel directors, line supervisors, training managers, CEOs, union representatives, apprentices)
- Targeted population workers (i.e., representing minorities, handicapped, limited English speaking, women)
- Trade and professional associations
- Job-specific businesses and/or associations (i.e., manufacturing, health care, food services, agriculture, secretarial)
- Employers of such targeted populations as handicapped minorities, women, former inmates

Educational Audiences

- Vocational education teachers
- Vocational education directors, department chairs
- Administrators, principals, superintendents

- Guidance and counseling personnel
- Special education teachers and administrators
- Local school board members
- Educational associations (i.e., vocational education, teachers, principals, superintendents, local boards)
- Selected levels and types of instruction (i.e., elementary, secondary, community colleges/postsecondary, adult, higher education, corrections, career educators)
- Teacher educators
- Academic teachers, special program teachers

Public Program Audiences

- JTPA personnel
- SDA staff
- PIC members
- Employability security
- State OICC
- Child and family services programs
- Rehabilitation
- Economic development programs
- Human services agencies
- Corrections
- Urban development, rural development
- City and county government officials
- Social workers
- Parole and probation officers
- Alcohol and drug abuse personnel
- Police officers

Community and Special Interest Group Audiences

- Economic development councils
- Chambers of commerce
- Racial/ethnic organizations
- Handicapped services associations
- Single parent groups
- Civic organizations (i.e., Kiwanis, Optimist, YMCA, YWCA)
- Taxpayers' organizations

Student Audiences

- Vocational education students and former students
- Vocational student organizations
- Nonvocational education students
- Dropouts
- Dropouts who have returned
- Students by level (i.e., secondary, postsecondary, adult)
- Inmates of correctional facilities
- JTPA participants and completers
- Rehabilitation clients
- Handicapped or other special needs vocational education students
- Nontraditional program participants

Parental Audiences

- Vocational education students and former students
- Handicapped children
- Minority
- School services, advisory or ad hoc study groups

In soliciting participation by the desired audiences at public hearings, there are a variety of strategies that can be used. Special care needs to be taken to avoid soliciting presenters whose views are already known and correspond to council views or that follow a single path. To avoid this potential hazard, the solicitation of presenters may be best if it is decentralized. In other words, staff should not be the sole source of inviting individuals to testify. The council may be able to do this, but they should be cautious about it.

An easy way of decentralizing the process is to identify the desired audience and ask others to assist in providing names. A variety of resources should be used. For example, if a hearing is being conducted on vocational education and JTPA coordination, the council would want names suggested by both communities. Who assists will be determined in part by the hearing topic and audience but some possible resources who could suggest names may include personnel and members from groups with whom the council has a liaison relationship (see chapter on Liaison Relationships), local advisory council members, local JTPA or education personnel from the program in the geographic area of the hearing, CEOs, organized labor, community and civic organizations in the area, and trade and professional associations.

Format

After a public hearing has been initiated, a format needs to be selected. Guidelines should be flexible in order to select a format that will best fulfill the needs of the council. The purpose of the hearing may determine its format.

- o Prepared Statement. Participants prepare comments in advance. (Some councils require copies.) The presentation is given to a hearing panel. Time frames are usually set in advance.
- o Question and Answer. Announce questions the council wishes to have addressed in advance. At the hearing, the panel states questions one at a time and participants address the question in a question-answer mode. It allows the hearing panel to probe questions and invites more participation. People may also submit written responses. This format requires a high level of skill and knowledge of the hearing panel.
- o Roundtable. The hearing panel is seated at different tables throughout the room. Participants engage in roundtable discussion of various issues. Each hearing table may hear a different issue, or issues may be given time frames for discussion. It may be difficult to tape record these sessions. Staff may need to be provided for note taking.
- o Questionnaire/Written. A questionnaire or written testimony may be used to supplement any of the above formats. It provides the council with an opportunity to hear from those who do not wish to prepare and/or present a public statement or who are unable to attend. It provides additional information that is easily quantifiable. Often, the council

has information it wants to collect, but does not want to limit comments to those appearing in person. A questionnaire may be the solution.

Location or site selection for a public hearing should be carefully aligned with the audience the council is attempting to reach as participants. The site must be readily accessible to the handicapped. Ease of accessibility for the participants and the general public is also important. The site should be appropriate to the focus of the participants. For example, if those testifying will be educators, an educational facility would be suitable. Some points that may be useful when considering a location follow:

- Centrally located, geographically, for the area the hearing is planned to serve
- Facilities well known by area residents
- Facilities that match the audience
- Large enough room to accommodate observers and media personnel
- Easily accessible without need for a map
- Room layout conducive to a "come and go" audience
- An area for the council to display handout materials or other information

If your council has seven or eight public hearings in a year (as several do), they will probably be located in varying geographic locations of the state. Council members from those areas may serve as the "local coordinating committee" and may put together other local committees to assist. Guidelines become very important because they not only provide direction, but also a checklist of what needs to be done. To some extent, guidelines will help to standardize hearings so that information gathered will have better compatibility.

Time and Date

The audience from which the council is seeking testimony needs to be considered in establishing the time. For example, parental groups, students, and labor groups have better attendance in the evening hours. Breakfast sessions and lunch-hour hearings have been successful for some councils. The best formats for these have been the roundtable and question and answer formats.

Depending on the state's climate, the cold, snowy season is generally not the best time of year to plan hearings. The hearing panel may not be able to be in attendance when participants can be. If the council is seeking audiences from education, the opening and closing months of school are generally poor date selections.

Topics being addressed should be timely. This creates interest and sparks attendance. If educational groups, boards, and other groups are all conducting hearings on popular topics such as graduation requirements, the topic may be timely, but "overheard."

Topics that will be of obvious interest to the governor when the legislature is in session should be scheduled enough in advance to allow time to prepare the report but not so far in advance that potential participants fail to see its relevancy.

Use

Use of the information gathered at a public hearing has already been discussed as it relates to selecting appropriate topics, formats, and audiences, but a few other points are in order.

As public hearings are designed, how and to whom they are reported should be carefully considered. If information will be categorized for quantitative reporting, the hearing structure needs uniformity.

Some thought needs to be given to anticipated publications that may be developed to report the findings. For example, if direct quotations are desirable, tape recording or written testimony may need to be built into the design of the hearing. Persons who testify generally want to know the disposition of their efforts. This should be made known at the hearing.

Organizing the Hearing

A great deal of planning and preparation goes into a public hearing. Even though council members tend to take an active role in hearings, the "leg work" in preparing for them lies with the council staff. Once the purpose and the six major factors (topic, audience, format, date and time, location, and use) are determined, staff can proceed. It is the council's responsibility to make these decisions, but it is the staff's responsibility to carry them out. For example, staff will secure facilities, write letters of invitation, prepare guide questions and topics for distribution, design publicity, secure media coverage, and take other actions necessary for conducting the hearing.

A local organizing committee may be very helpful, particularly if a council member is in the local area. Local committees can suggest and secure facilities, talk with media, provide publicity, and offer many other services that are difficult from the council office.

The following list may be used as both a checklist and a listing of suggestions that have been found to contribute to successful public hearings for state councils over the years.

Hearing panel. The hearing panel should be composed of council members. If a local or other state agency is co-sponsoring the hearing, they should also have representation on the panel. Five to seven members are adequate, but fewer are also appropriate.

Council members attending. Members of the council in attendance who are not serving on the hearing panel should be introduced. They may assist staff with registration and name tags, talk with media, distribution of council materials, or talk individually with persons testifying who have questions they want answered or from whom the member believes more information can be provided. Members can be very helpful in acting as hosts/hostesses.

Council staff. Staff are not members of the hearing panel. It is important that staff are free to manage the logistics of the meeting. Hearings are usually "come and go." Staff need to be available to thank presenters as they leave, pick up written testimony or questionnaires, and assist the process by being available to continue discussion with presenters who need more than the allotted time. When hearing topics are controversial, staff can assist the panel if they are available so that the panel can ask that the presentations that exceed the time limits be continued with staff. This avoids the appearance of "being cut off before being heard."

Name tags and plates. Panel members, other members, staff, and participants should all have name tags for identification. Name plates should be in front of each panel member.

Recording presentations. If hearings are being recorded by note-taking, the person responsible should be located at the front of the room. Tape recordings are preferred for accuracy. Many state councils are now videotaping hearings. Presenters should be told their remarks are being recorded.

Sign-in. Most states want an accurate record of attendance. In addition to names, sign in sheets should ask for occupation and address. Thank-you notes are written to presenters and may also be sent to observers. The list provides names and addresses for future use by the council in its efforts to advise the general public and the business community.

Report dissemination. The reports or publications resulting from the hearing or using input from the hearing should be distributed to all who attended. This builds credibility for the council because people see that their input is being put to use.

Display areas. Because of the usual large audiences of observers, the hearing presents an opportunity for the council to disseminate its publications and other information. An attractive display, rather than a stack of papers on a chair at the door, should be provided.

Welcome and opening remarks. Local personnel may wish to have local leaders extend a welcome to the council and its guests. The panel chair or moderator should also welcome participants and provide opening remarks. These remarks should give highlights of the council and their responsibilities and then describe the hearing. Remarks can be brief, but should explain the council's purpose in holding the hearings, how the hearings help the council perform and carry out its role and function, and how the council plans to use input provided.

A clear description of the process selected for conducting the hearing should be given. Time frames should be clear and expectations of observers should be stated. The chair may wish to indicate at this time that staff are available if a presenter wants to show additional information after the allotted time has been used. These may need to be restated for later arrivals.

Staff should prepare the panel moderator carefully. A clear listing describing the process should be written out for the chair to use in opening remarks.

Introductions. Panel members, council members and staff should be introduced. The moderator should point out how these individuals will be available to assist throughout the day. Local committee members who have assisted the council should be introduced and thanked. If the audience is small, a quick, around-the-room introduction session may be helpful, particularly if a discussion or participation in question-answer sessions is anticipated.

Hospitality. Coffee, tea, and soft drinks add a gesture of hospitality to the hearing. Local committees may be able to arrange for sponsorship. A sign on the table plus a public thank you are both necessary.

Room arrangements. Persons presenting testimony should present it to the panel. Microphones should be set up so others can hear. If it is possible to have presenters to one side and the panel to the other, this arrangement may help to have both in view of the presenter. The most popular arrangement is for the panel to face the audience and the presenter to face the panel.

Reporting to members. Members who served on the hearing panel should report their findings to the full council at its next regular meetings. Staff will want to note any conclusions or suggestions offered.

- If hearing topics or questions have been identified in advance, these should be prominently displayed or distributed.
- A schedule for presentations should be made in advance. Persons testifying should know in advance so they can plan their work schedules around this. That is why adhering to designated time frames is an absolute must.
- At an "open" hearing when the council does not know who will be present, the most popular process is to hear testimony in the order in which presenters signed up or to have a sign-up sheet with time slots identified.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

This chapter is designed to touch on a variety of suggestions for administration and organizational matters for which council staff have responsibility. Suggestions are found in the handbook as they relate to specific council mandates. Those included here apply to the general administration and organization of various responsibilities rather than specific areas.

Efficient management of council activities would be difficult if some careful thought did not go into organizing in such a way as to build a reservoir of resources that can be tapped with little effort. The chapter on developing liaison relationships deals, in part, with developing such a resource bank. For example, staff with good liaison relationships can tap this resource for names and addresses of specific groups it wishes to target with a survey or invite to address issues at public hearings.

The overall effectiveness of state councils is largely dependent upon the ability of the council's staff to organize and administer efforts and initiatives that the council has chosen to pursue. Council staff must have the ability to organize activities the council wants to undertake to provide the council with information it is seeking. The role of the council is to act on that information, that is, draw conclusions, make recommendations, analyze, and advise. Once the council has fulfilled this role, staff becomes responsible for orchestrating and disseminating the council action.

A very simplistic description may be to regard the council as the decision-making body and staff as being responsible for carrying out actions related to those decisions. A more thorough analysis points out staff responsibility for organizing and administering efforts that help the council make decisions, beginning with planning, following through implementation, conclusions, recommendations, and dissemination.

This is a challenging task that must be carefully designed. Throughout this handbook, a variety of suggestions and ideas are presented in an effort to assist staff. This chapter presents suggestions that may be both umbrellas and extensions of specific suggestions thus adding to the effectiveness and efficiency of councils.

This chapter concerns itself more with process than with content. The suggestions delineated are more "how to" than "what to" in nature. Perhaps a better title for this chapter would be "helpful hints, not elsewhere noted."

Coordination of Activities

Depending on how one counts the mandated responsibilities of the council for the 2-year reporting period, there are anywhere from 9 to 15 mandated requirements. Separate studies or research activities addressing each mandate would be an impossible assignment for council staff, a nightmare to manage through contracts, and an impossible budget request. Therefore, a process for meeting mandated responsibilities must be carefully calculated.

Staff must dovetail activities so as to produce multiple results from a single initiative. For example, the time and resources required to examine the "coordination of JTPA and vocational education" are too great to be narrowly focused on this single purpose. When examining this issue, additional information can easily be extracted that will contribute to the council's responsibility for assessing education and private sector involvement, programs for target populations, distribution of funding, business and labor concerns, policies for strengthening vocational education, and many others.

Managing the information gathered and bringing it to the council's attention are staff functions. Mandated responsibilities that are met through state-driven initiatives are more likely to have a state-felt impact than those that are designed to "meet the mandate."

Council member reports of their involvement with liaison groups, participation at state and national conferences, and work with local PICs, economic development councils, and other activities should also contribute to the council's report pertaining to specific mandates. Activities of this nature should be a purposeful part of the council's plan of work. If such activities do not contribute to helping the council meet its mandates, they should be reassessed for possible discontinuation or redirecting. Specific examples are located in the chapters on liaison relationships and council memberships.

Dissemination of Information

A council newsletter to bring visibility to council initiatives may be a useful tool. A concerted effort to develop a mailing list encompassing a broad audience of the public and private sectors, including the educational community, can be effective in reporting to the general public and the business community. A newsletter can keep its audience apprised of council activities, state and national issues, innovative practices, legislation and a host of other events. Interviews and editorials illustrate that the council is listening to the public and seeking their views.

The development of good mailing lists for receipt of council information is a never-ending task. The mailing list should be categorized into different sections so it is useful in targeting specific information to specific audiences. The lists by category should be labeled as to when they need to be updated. Keeping these updated will involve the entire staff. As association officers and personnel changes are made, these need to be noted.

- State Department of Labor
- State headquarters for AFL-CIO
- Library of Congress
- Governor's staff, press secretary
- Official state newsletter
- Officers of state's student organizations

Getting council publications and information to the public or to the audience for which they are intended can be done in a variety of ways. Mandated responsibilities for "reporting to" make this an essential activity. A review of suggested categories for council mailing lists provides some suggestions for how to develop the council's private sector audience or its audience from the educational community, the JTPA community, and others.

Postage can become an expensive item. Bulk-rate postage permits may help to alleviate expense although it will increase handling time because materials must be arranged in the required order. Mailing services are an option that staff may want to pursue. Service charges can easily be compared to staff time and wages.

Distribution of materials through educational conferences and meetings will save a great deal of postage. This will have to be weighed against timeliness of distribution and the work of getting boxes of materials to meetings.

Exhibition booths at conventions attended by private sector groups are particularly useful when attempting to reach this audience. Exhibit booths are expensive. The council may wish to use this opportunity to interview private sector members who visit the exhibit to obtain their views on vocational education issues. A small, hand-held tape recorder makes the process easy and often attracts other convention participants. If more than one member is helping with the exhibit, one can conduct interviews while the other talks with visitors if you don't care to attract an audience.

If the council is actively involved in a variety of liaison relationships with other organizations, the opportunity to set up displays or distribute council materials may be numerous. Organizing materials and creating attractive displays can be done one time and re-used frequently if transportability and flexibility are built into the design. Displays and exhibits are good ways for the council to be visible at functions of different groups. Members usually want to participate, and it is an opportunity for opening dialogue with the membership of these groups.

- State corrections staff
- High schools, teachers, administrators
- Local vocational education department chairs or administrators
- Public hearing participants
- Council liaison groups
- Community-based organizations
- State trade associations
- Corporate training directors
- Teacher educators
- Centers for career guidance, single parent projects, dislocated worker centers, and others
- Education Service Center managers and superintendents
- State Job Training Coordinating Council
- State vocational association officers and staff
- American Vocational Association (AVA) board, officers, and staff
- State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
- American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC)
- State Education Association's and national headquarters
- State principals association
- State Association of School Administrators
- State Association of School Boards
- Women's American ORT
- Special interest groups
- State legislature and staff
- U.S. Congress and staff
- U.S. Department of Education

Mailing lists for legislators, agencies, boards, and some trade and professional associations can often be purchased. This may be costly initially, but staff time to write letters requesting lists and then keeping them up to date is also costly. Following is a sample listing of categories a council may want to include on their mailing list:

- State CoVE members
- Past state CoVE members
- N/CoVE staff and members
- NAS/CoVE officers
- State CoVE executive directors and chairs
- State directors of vocational education
- National Center for Research in Vocational Education
- State board of education, members, and staff
- Community college boards, trustees, and staff
- Board for higher education
- Department of Rehabilitation staff
- Department responsible for JTPA
- State's budgeting agency
- State library
- Directors of vocational centers
- Community college deans and presidents
- Adult education directors
- Community education leaders
- PIC chairs and SDA directors
- Local advisory council members (obtain when sending membership certificates)
- Technical committee members (as required by Section III of the Perkins Act)
- Wardens and education directors in correctional facilities

Staff Reporting

The expectation of councils related to the monitoring of staff activities varies among states and probably is affected in part by the executive director's administrative abilities and tenure with the council. These expectations will also change as the council membership and chair change.

The extent of administrative authority relinquished to staff calls for some discussion. For some councils, full authority to administer is given with the expectation of full accountability. Other states have reduced the accountability expectations when some members became more interested in how staff approached an activity (administrative style) than whether or not the activity was a success. Single, isolated events do not always reflect an overall goal that staff is attempting to reach, so some caution should be noted as needed.

Three basic formats for staff reporting are most common: (1) memoranda, (2) distribution of itinerary, and (3) written or oral reports.

Memoranda

Keeping council members informed can be accomplished in several ways. Some councils publish monthly or bi-monthly memorandums to all council members. Information about council meetings, committees, research, and other activities is included. Staff activities may also be incorporated in lieu of other forms of staff reports. The memorandum may serve as a calendar of events. Contents should be composed on a day-to-day basis as a collection of information items so that a day doesn't have to be devoted to writing the memorandum. Council members sometimes submit items or reports which are included.

Reporting Council Activities

The most common form of council reporting is a written report. The format of the report should complement the kind of information being reported, and the style should be directed toward its primary audience. Several schools of thought are involved in the whole issue of reporting. Some pros and cons for various alternatives are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Publication format and design. Council staff needs to weigh carefully the format and design of publications. For the most part, state precedents are the influencing factor when making decisions about typing versus typesetting, printing versus photocopying, one-color versus two-color print, paper quality, use of photographs, illustrative design, and other publication options. Certainly, budget constraints must be considered.

Because of printing costs and budget constraints, staff may want to present alternatives with accompanying rationale to the council if staff is seeking major change in council tradition. Printing and preparation of publications are administrative responsibilities that staff should handle. If individual members have strong views that could cause controversy among the council and/or with staff, discussion with the chair, executive committee, or an appointed committee may be wise.

Length of report. The length of the report should be appropriate to the information that needs to be reported. Some council members are adamantly opposed to a report that exceeds three to five pages. A research project or major council study may not be conducive to extensive summarization if it is to be effective. There are several alternatives available, as well as several factors that need to be considered.

First, the purpose of the report must be considered. If its purpose is to provide in-depth review and study, numerous alternatives, or examples, a short report may not be adequate. Sometimes, a list of conclusions and recommendations does not satisfy those who need to understand the basis for the conclusions.

If the report has both a primary and secondary audience, they need to be considered. For example, the council has responsibility for recommending several actions to the state board concerning vocational education's involvement with the private sector. The state board and their staff may be satisfied with highlights of the council's findings, the conclusions the council draws, and recommendations the council makes. Members may wish to disseminate information gathered in their study about how these partnerships can be initiated, sample model programs, ideas for improving partnerships, the benefits to the educational programs, and a resource list in the report and disseminate it to a secondary audience--the vocational education community.

Those who are opposed to long reports argue that they will not be read; others argue that a short report leaves out too much useful information. An alternative is to prepare an executive summary as well as the full report. Executive summaries may be prepared separately or placed in the beginning of the report. Another alternative is to break down the report into a series of smaller reports. Costs enter into the decision.

Typed or typeset. The major consideration for this decision is cost. Today's word processing and printing systems may offer an acceptable compromise. Graphic capabilities of word processors that were not previously available for typewritten copy strengthen this position. The major argument that is given to override the cost factor is that a "typed" copy does not have the same appeal and that if the council wants their report read, its publication should be attractive to the audience. There is certainly research supporting the theory. A parallel argument is that if it is important, funds should support making it attractive so that it will be read. Another viewpoint is that a report to be used only by state agency personnel does not need appeal, because they probably have to read it anyway--regardless of design or length.

Interest features. The use of multiple colors, photographs, charts, design, and other elements used for reader appeal are added expenses, but again there are several options available. The layout of publications can be such that the use of two colors, screens, photographs, or charts, is limited to a few pages. This will give appeal, but keep costs at a minimum. Sometimes, executive summaries are designed for appeal and the full report is designed to be cost effective.

State precedence. The state-of-the-art for government publications has implications similar to those described in the section on office and furnishings selection. If the practice in the state is for inexpensive publications, this may be the best route. On the other hand, if well-designed publications have greater potential for impact, the actual cost of creating the impact may be less if funds are used to support giving appeal to publications.

Cost factors. Council budgets are limited. Printing is expensive, but there are numerous cost-effective processes that have already been discussed. The trade-offs must be weighed aginst the benefits. Graphic arts programs and printing programs in the public education system or other public institutions may provide services to state-funded programs and agencies. Staff should explore this. Timeliness may be a trade-off.

Audiovisual reports. Today's technology is increasing the use of media other than publications for making reports. An increasing incidence in the use of videotape recordings to supplement written reports has been seen. These can be effective and can encourage a thorough review of the report.

Preparing reports. Council staff needs to organize a system to collect information necessary for council reports so it is at their fingertips when they are ready to use it. If the council truly dovetails activities to achieve a high level of production from limited expenditures of resources, staff will need to pull it all together. This is more work for staff than contracting with a consultant to research and prepare a report for the council to rubber stamp, but it more truly reflects the efforts of the council and their actual involvement in the deliberation process.

A council that has been actively involved in its own activities can provide staff with the direction needed to draft reports. A summarizing discussion session gives staff a sense of the council's thoughts on an issue and the rationale for their decision. With well-organized information, staff can then develop the report with the appropriate documentation used by the council in making that decision. This emphasizes the decisionmaking role of council members.

To expect council members to write reports is unrealistic. They provide the content, staff provides the writing. Some council members have skills for editing, some have skills for displaying data, and others are adept at phrasing statements to target a specific audience. These are all welcomed competencies that can be very useful to staff if the members can give this kind of time. Staff should let members know their involvement and assistance would be appreciated.

LIAISON RELATIONSHIPS

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act states: "coordinate . . . cooperate . . . consult with . . . involvement with . . . partnerships . . . meet with . . . collaborate . . . assist in . . . participation with . . . joint development . . . outreach . . . responsive to . . . supportive of . . . promote links . . ."

Language of the Perkins Act makes it very clear that Congress did not want any segment of vocational education to work in isolation from the vocational education community, the general education community, the private sector, or any other public sector segments. Emphasis on partnerships is abundant, as is emphasis on coordination and cooperation. Language of federal and state legislation for other public programs is beginning to be just as clear with its nonisolation language.

The tenor present in the public sector for coordination and cooperation is emerging in the private sector as partnerships for education, economic development, job training, and social and human development programs are becoming commonplace. A dependence on the cooperative atmosphere and coordinated approach is being created nationwide.

Experienced council staff believe that to be effective, state councils must develop liaison relationships with a variety of organizations, associations, and agencies from both the public and the private sector. These relationships will enhance coordination, which ultimately helps to diminish both unnecessary duplication of efforts and the potential for omission. More important, they will establish credibility for both the council and its staff.

Ultimately, council cooperation and coordination with other entities benefit groups or individuals involved. These groups may possess information, expertise, or authority for change. They may be audiences seeking council recommendations and advice, or they may have the ability to cause or encourage implementation of council advice and recommendations.

Cooperation among public sector employees and appointed or elected officials is an expected mode of behavior. To attempt to work outside this mode would be futile.

Establishing Liaisons

State council staff members usually bring their own style with them to the position. This style was probably a factor in their employment. Below are some general suggestions that have been successfully used in several states in establishing, improving, and maintaining liaison relationships with various groups and individuals. Staff should consider their own expertise, council preferences, and state atmosphere in following these suggestions.

Initiating Liaisons

- Send introductory letter of self or council (enclose a business card).
- Use introductory letter by council chair (to introduce new executive director or council member).
- Provide recent council report, newsletter, or other publication with cover letter.
- Make an appointment to discuss mutual interests.
- Attend an open meeting of the group.
- Seek a third-party introduction (by council member or other mutual acquaintance).
- Watch for publicity through the media that may provide a natural entree.
- Volunteer to assist with an activity of mutual interest.
- Invite participation in council activities.

Improving Liaisons

- Focus on mutual interests.
- Participate in an activity of the group (attend meeting, conference).
- Identify benefits formally through correspondence, requesting further discussion.
- Determine if a council member has a cooperative relationship with a member and build on that relationship.
- Find a point for positive interaction, particularly if the group and the council have historically held opposing positions on critical issues.
- Be candid regarding the interests of the council in improving relationships, pointing out mutual benefits.

Maintaining Liaisons

- Review council minutes, policies, and staff reports to identify the kinds of ongoing liaison relationships that have been established.
- Assess the value of existing relationships periodically in terms of mutual benefits and expended resources.
- Determine ways in which relationships could be enhanced.
- Respond promptly to requests for information from other groups.
- Invite input from others where appropriate.
- Be punctual with established agreements for coordinating efforts.
- Be cognizant of how the council can benefit other groups or individuals.

State-Level Liaisons

Most state councils are located in the capital city. Numerous state headquarters for professional and trade associations, as well as nearly all of the state's agencies will be in the state capital. The list of those with whom the council may wish to establish a working relationship goes on and on and if caution is not taken, all of one's time could be spent developing good public relationships.

- Priority 1. Establish yourself and your council with those whom the council must advise and submit recommendations. Under the Perkins Act, this includes the state board, governor, and the state Job Training Coordinating Council. Receipt of the council's advice and recommendations is directly related to the council's credibility with these groups and individuals.
- Priority 2. Establish yourself and your council with those who have direct policymaking authority to implement the council's advice and recommendations under the Perkins Act. This will include the state board, governor, and the state Job Training Coordinating Council. Although councils have no responsibility for reporting to state legislators, these bodies have authority to legislate actions that relate to council advice or recommendations.
- Priority 3. Establish yourself and your council with those to whom the council must report. At the state level, the Perkins Act requires the council to report to the business community and the general public, in addition to the state board and the governor. At the federal level, the council reports to the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Labor.

- Priority 4. Establish yourself and your council with those individuals and groups with whom cooperation and coordination is essential if adopted policies are to be fully implemented (i.e., local schools, SDAs, local advisory councils, teachers, and administrators).

Initiating State-Level Contacts

State government, like any other segment of society, has its protocol. Protocol may vary in its importance from state to state, but nonetheless, it is wise to check it out before proceeding. Following are suggestions:

Governor's office. Usually, the governor has a staff person or persons with responsibilities related to education. This person is the individual with whom staff of the council will initiate contact in the governor's office. Keeping the governor's education staff apprised of council studies and activities keeps the governor informed. Education staff will be knowledgeable of the governor's concerns and interests related to vocational education and thus can be helpful to the council in addressing these issues. Education staff researches a variety of issues and seeks research by others on issues. A good working relationship between the council and the governor's office can result in coordination that has mutual benefits. Depending on the state, direct communication with the governor may or may not occur. One must keep in mind that direct communication with the governor's education staff may be the desired goal. Governors themselves have limited time but have great confidence in their staff, so time may be better spent with staff. [Note: In states having council members appointed by the governor, there may be staff, other than education staff, having responsibility for appointments. It may be that the council will work through the appointments staff in working with either the governor or the governor's education staff. Responsibilities of the appointments staff in coordinating council activities with the governor (or governor's education staff) should be carefully checked in these instances.]

Council members, particularly those appointed by the governor, may be personally acquainted with the governor or the governor's staff. Existing relationships may be a basis for establishing a good working relationship with the governor's office. Care should be taken neither to exploit these relationships nor to assume that viable relationships will naturally follow.

Liaison-building activities with the governor's office include the following:

- Be sure mailing lists for council publications, brochures, newsletters, meeting agendas, minutes and other appropriate informative documents include not only the governor, but also the governor's staff, such as education aides, appointments staff, economic development staff, and others.

- Include a cover letter with information that targets specific issues of interest to the governor or staff.

- Hand-carry information to staff and discuss council recommendations or advice with them, particularly when it contains specific suggestions or topics being pursued by them.

- Ask if there are studies with which the council can assist.

- Respond promptly to requests for information.

- Provide information from sources in addition to the council (such as local studies, national studies, studies from other states) that may be useful.

- Inform the governor's office of achievement by individuals, schools, private sector, and others to whom they may wish to send congratulatory letters.

- Invite staff to discuss issues at regular council meetings.

- Involve council members in discussions with the governor and/or staff whenever possible. Council members who are politically active in the party opposite that of the governor's office should maintain a very low profile in that office. Likewise, those who are politically active on issues not related to vocational education, even though they are of the same political party, may need to play secondary roles when meeting with the governor. This sometimes shifts the focus to other issues.

State board--CEO--state director of vocational education. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the state board will generally be the person through which the state council staff initiates contact with the board. The CEO is known as the chief state school officer. If the state board for vocational education is separate from the state board of education (Wisconsin, Indiana, and Oklahoma), the CEO is commonly known as the state director of vocational education. If vocational education and education in general have the same board (Missouri, Texas, California, Michigan, Illinois, and Kansas), the CEO or chief state school officer will be the state superintendent, commissioner of education, or similar title.

If the CEO or chief state school officer is elected, it is imperative to keep in mind that the position is political.

Again, for those council members appointed by the state board, "acquaintances" may exist. The same caution as stated for governor-appointed councils applies.

In states having a state board of education that also serves as the state board for vocational education, the person who is designated as the state director of vocational education will usually be one or two administrative levels removed from the CEO or chief state school officer. This situation (most common among states) creates a new twist for establishing good relationships with the state board. Additional layers of administrators may need to be added to the council's list for rapport development.

Although the state director of vocational education is the state's key administrator for vocational education, this individual is not the state board's CEO. In these states, the council may work more closely with the state director of vocational education than with the superintendent or CEO, but the top-level relationship needs to be fostered because it provides the needed, direct link to the state board. Neither individual should be ignored. In these organizational structures the council will be viewed as a special interest group whereas a separate state board for vocational education views the council as being aligned to its single charge.

Different roles of the state boards themselves will affect the kind of relationship they have with their state councils. This in turn will influence the manner in which the council pursues its posture with the board. For example, if the state board appoints the council members, this may provide a sound basis for an effective working relationship.

A council in a state having a separate state board for vocational education is more likely to have the state board's ear because it is a natural relationship. When a state board serves more than vocational education, that board will have several councils and special interest groups seeking its attention. The attention and time these boards give issues brought before it by the council may be far less than that of the state board serving only vocational education. A council working with a comprehensive state board may find it necessary to intensify efforts in establishing the relationship and rapport needed to be effective.

The number of times during the year in which comprehensive boards address vocational education issues is of concern to the vocational education community in many states. Concerns voiced are that vocational education only appears on the agenda when the board adopts the state plan and its budget proposal, thus giving the impression that vocational education is a low priority to the comprehensive board.

Two postures for state council are surfacing in these situations. One is that councils are encouraging the state board to include vocational education issues as least four times a year on its agenda. The second is that councils are seeking to have state boards adjourn their meeting for general education and reconvene as a state board for vocational education to consider the concerns of vocational education.

The sole state agency requirement for receipt and administration of vocational education funds is a uniform governance structure throughout the states, but results in a variety of systems of administration because it must accommodate various state organizational patterns. States having separate systems for secondary and postsecondary education may use either system as the sole state agency. The "other" system has an agreement or contract for how it works with the state's board for vocational education.

It is essential that the council develop a healthy liaison relationship with that "other" board. The council does not make its recommendations and submit its advice, as mandated by the Perkins Act, to that board. However, nothing precludes the council from doing so. Many councils functioning in states with this system have elected to make such recommendations in order to facilitate desired actions.

A word of caution--care must be taken to be certain that it does not appear the council does not recognize the state board's (for vocational education) authority or that the council is trying to circumvent that authority. One successful approach has been to use language that recommends that the "other" board assist the state board for vocational education in achieving the desired outcome by initiating appropriate actions. From time to time, states undergo a struggle related to the governance issue. State councils can inadvertently get involved in these struggles unless they are conscientiously aware of the lines of authority and careful to respect them.

The question of governance is one in which numerous state councils take an active role and make policy recommendations. The point here is that staff should be careful not to thrust the council into the debate unknowingly.

Liaison-building activities with the state board include the following:

- Attend meetings.
- Work with subcommittees of the state board that may be addressing vocational education policies.
- Invite the chair to address the council.
- Include members on mailing lists to receive council publications.
- Plan joint meetings or forums of the state board and state council to address vocational education issues.
- Host an annual dinner for informal discussion between the council and the state board.
- Present recommendations to the state board at a special session (such as an evening session) to allow adequate time for discussion. (Presentation should be made by council members, not staff.)
- Attend public hearings of the state board.
- Some councils present appropriate reports to the state board at public hearings. Others do not, feeling they have special meetings for this purpose.
- Be knowledgeable of key issues and priority initiatives of the board at all times and keep council members apprised.
- Communicate the concept of working together rather than an adversarial relationship.

Liaison-building activities with the CEO include the following:

- o Plan periodic (such as quarterly) meetings to discuss vocational education policy issues. Include the council chair or committee chair who is involved with a topic the council wishes to communicate.
- o Foster respect and trust plus the idea that the council can be a valuable asset for improving vocational education.
- o Keep the CEO apprised of council activities, including possible advice and recommendations the council will be making to the state board.
- o Review council reports, recommendations, and advice with the CEO prior to presentation to the state board.
- o Support (openly) initiatives of the CEO when they concur with council positions.
- o Request input from the CEO for studies and research the council might provide which would be helpful to state board decision making.
- o Invite the CEO to make presentations to the council and engage in dialogues with them, particularly about issues such as the state board's legislative package and budget requests.
- o Encourage appointments of council members to ad hoc study groups of the CEO or state board.
- o Include the CEO on council's mailing list for publications and other information of the council.
- o Be apprised of critical issues and activities facing the CEO.
- o Provide information upon request or as it becomes available that may assist or be of interest to the CEO.
- o Send copies to the CEO when corresponding with board staff or members.
- o Feature articles concerning positions or initiatives of the CEO in newsletters or publications.
- o Inform the CEO of direct communication with board members.
- o Be cognizant of deputy, vice, or assistant staff levels with whom relationships need to be fostered.

Liaison-building activities with state director of vocational education include the following:

- o Establish regular meetings with the state director.

- Ask to be invited to attend vocational education staff meetings. Respect the need for confidentiality on issues when appropriate.
- Keep the state director informed of council activities.
- Encourage director's attendance at council meetings and make agenda support materials available.
- Request input for areas of study which would be beneficial to the state director's initiatives.
- Invite presentations or regularly scheduled updates at council meetings.
- Communicate appreciation for state vocational education staff in efforts to assist council such as providing information or addressing the council.
- Review council reports, advice, and recommendations with the director before making presentations to state board or others.
- Include the director and staff on mailing list of council.
- Share information, discuss conference participation, or provide new resouce information, studies, etc. to vocational education state staff for areas related to their specific responsibilities.
- Develop a rapport that reflects mutual goals for quality vocational education. This does not always mean total agreement on process, delivery, priority, and other factors.

Job Training Coordinating Council (JTCC)

An effective liaison relationship with the state's JTCC is important, not only as a group to whom the council reports its advice and recommendations concerning the coordination of JTPA and vocational education, but also as a group that can be helpful to the council in its evaluation of this coordination. At least one member of all state councils will be a member of the JTCC. In several states, more than one member is a member of both councils (Alabama, Alaska, Illinois, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexicc, Ohio, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin). These members will be valuable elements in developing good working relationships.

JTCCs are appointed by the governor, with a chairperson representing the private sector. JTCCs have responsibility to advise the governor. In addition, they have responsibility to work with other agencies to identify various training needs. The JTCC reviews and comments on the state plan for vocational education. JTCCs are required to access coordination among a variety of state agencies.

Council staff should become well versed on the Job Training Partnership Act (PL 97-300), which is the federal legislation for employment and training programs. The NAS/CoVE Handbook contains summaries of JTPA and the JTCCs. These will provide needed, basic information on which to build a more thorough understanding about your state's JTPA system. Chapter V has a description of the JTCC; Chapter VIII summarizes JTPA and cites sections of the Perkins Act pertaining to JTPA and vocational education coordination.

Keep in mind that even though the JTCC and the state council on vocational education may appear to have similar responsibilities, there are significant differences. One major difference is the autonomy of the councils and their staff. Federal legislation does not provide that staff of the JTCC be obtained by and be responsible to the JTCC itself. Staff are employed by the agency administering JTPA programs and assigned to staff the JTCC, whereas council staff work for the council, not the state board of education. A second difference is that JTCCs advise local as well as state entities on their plans, whereas the state councils advise only state-level entities and report at the federal level.

Another difference is generally the size and makeup of the two councils. Vocational education councils have 13 members, with 7 from the private sector and 6 from the educational arena. JTCCs are generally much larger, with a significant membership from local government and public sector agencies.

Liaison-building activities with the JTCC and JTPA community include the following:

- Attend meetings of the JTCC.
- Include the JTCC and JTPA community (SDA, PICs, and others) on mailing lists of council to receive publications and other council information.
- Participate (both members and staff) in conferences sponsored by the JTPA community.
- Meet with and participate on subcommittees of the JTCC.
- Hold joint meetings of the JTCC and state council and/or subcommittees.
- Establish regular (quarterly) meetings of the staff for both councils.
- Avoid duplication by discussing plans of both councils for the assessment of coordination between JTPA and vocational education.
- Plan reports at regular meetings of both councils to keep members apprised of the activities of each.

- Assist the JTPA community to better understand the Perkins Act by providing information through presentations or summarized materials about the act itself.
- Co-sponsor studies or research.

Private Sector

Trade or professional associations serving the private sector may provide the needed avenue for the council to "advise the business community and general public." These liaison relationships are the least well developed for state councils and the educational community in general. Cooperative efforts between the public and private sector, particularly with vocational education, have a long history. These have been mainly locally driven and without the sense of a nationwide concerted effort, which began with the 1976 Vocational Education Amendments, gaining momentum and reaching mandated status in the JTPA of 1982 and the Perkins Act of 1984.

Therefore, not only is the expertise and the finesse with which partnerships are built at an infant stage, the acceptance level of the benefits for the two sectors continues to be in need of influence. Keep in mind that segments of the public sector are often mandated to coordinate and cooperate with each other, but for the private sector, it is a voluntary process.

The development of effective liaisons with private sector groups may have the longest way to go and could become extremely time consuming. To assist in this endeavor, it is suggested that councils tap into existing efforts as resources in this area.

The National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education (NAS/CoVE) has worked to establish a liaison relationship with several private sector associations at the national level, as have national vocational education associations of educators, administrators, and state directors. These efforts have provided an entree at the state level for many councils.

Local liaison relationships, particularly through local advisory councils, may be additional resources to state councils. These relationships may be directly linked to the private business or corporation, in lieu of their state association counterpart.

The other obvious resources are the council members themselves. The seven members of the private sector can do a great deal within their own fields to establish positive rapport.

As councils assess the labor force within their own states to determine growth and retraining needs, they will acquire insight into which private sector groups should be pursued first. Following are examples of the kinds of trade and professional associations or businesses with whom councils may find liaison relationships advantageous.

Worker Related

- Organized labor
- Secretarial organizations
- Nursing organizations

Management Related

- Training and personnel association
- Civic groups for business (e.g., Chamber of Commerce and small business associations)

Industry Related

- Medical associations (e.g., hospital, health, and dental)
- Financial associations (e.g., banking, savings and loan, credit and insurance)
- Agricultural associations
- Manufacturing associations

Liaison-building activities with the private sector include the following:

- Attend conventions and other state meetings of trade and professional associations (staff and members).
- Provide a session (presentation or workshop) at meetings to discuss vocational education partnerships with the private sector.
- Exhibit at conventions to distribute vocational education and council information.
- Provide certificates to acknowledge assistance given by the private sector to vocational education through service on local advisory committees or special partnerships at the local level.
- Commend and recognize private sector initiatives in publications and news releases of the council, citing individuals, associations and companies by name.
- Invite representatives of state associations to attend council meetings and/or make presentations to the council about their needs for a future work force.

- Hold public hearings in small businesses, union centers, or industrial settings.
- Invite representatives of the private sector to provide input to the council on various issues through surveys, public hearings, blue ribbon panels, technical committees.
- Develop a mailing list of private sector individuals who have been involved in vocational education for distribution of newsletters and other information to maintain their involvement.
- Provide news releases to local newspapers, radio, and television to acknowledge contributions of the private sector to vocational education.
- Invite a panel of association representatives to meet with the council or its committee to identify strategies to assist the council in effectively reporting to the business community and general public.
- Work with trade and professional associations to exchange news items for newsletters.
- Secure members of the private sector to address vocational education and JTPA conferences to present their views on education and training for employment.

Other Agencies and Organizations for Liaison Relationships

Following are categories and examples of groups with which the council may find a cooperative working relationship beneficial. Although the council has no mandated responsibility to these groups, they may be instrumental in encouraging decision-making bodies to adopt council recommendations and advice. The groups will also be responsible for initiating the changes needed to implement new policy successfully.

Vocational education community. The kinds of vocational education groups taking shape in any state will vary because of the delivery system, state organizational structure, size of state, and a variety of other factors. Because these groups will be affected by council advice and recommendations, developing a communication linkage with them is important.

Vocational education groups may be a resource to the council in two ways. First, they possess much of the information needed by the council to fulfill many of its mandates, particularly the evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of vocational education. Secondly, they may provide valuable input for council advice and recommendations.

If council recommendations and advice become policy adoptions by governing boards, the vocational education community will be instrumental in implementing and carrying out these policies. Although some policies call for state level process, practice, and activity implementation, others may be dependent upon attitude and more localized initiatives. A good rapport between the council and the grassroots of the vocational education community may ultimately determine the impact of the council's efforts. Groups may or may not be formally organized into associations, therefore may require varying approaches.

Following are examples of liaison-building activities that may be effective and of the kinds of groups and organizations with which the council may work cooperatively.

Liaison-building activities with the vocational educational community include the following:

- o Participate in (or cosponsor) inservice education activities of the state's vocational association.
- o Assist vocational educators to work more effectively with the private sector by providing inservice education and technical assistance for working with local and/or regional advisory councils and private industry councils.
- o Work with and support activities of the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) by having a council member or staff person with assigned liaison responsibilities.
- o Schedule joint sessions with the SOICC for input into planning and receipt of information.
- o Participate in inservice education meetings for administrators of vocational education programs, providing them with an update of council activities and concerns.
- o Include local, regional, and state vocational educators on mailing lists of the council to receive reports, publications, newsletters, and other council information.
- o Offer to provide a periodic review and update of council activities at meetings of association boards. Invite reciprocal reports.
- o Conduct public hearings to obtain the views of the special interest groups of vocational educators.
- o Commend and publicize achievement of individuals, groups, and programs of the vocational education community.
- o Conduct interviews and surveys to obtain views of the vocational education community.
- o Request the vocational education community to conduct tours of their programs and facilities for the individual council members.

- Encourage council members and/or committees to select a group or organization having interests which align with their council responsibilities and develop a liaison relationship as a council representative to that group, attending meetings, reporting to the council, and so on.
- Encourage council members to become participating members of committees of various vocational education groups.
- Attend conferences sponsored by the vocational education section of the state board, make presentations, encourage council participation, have an exhibit, and conduct public hearings in conjunction with conferences.
- Meet with university personnel to present council information pertinent to their concerns.
- Discuss vocational education policy issues with students in preservice and inservice education programs at universities.
- Provide council publications to universities for use in class discussions with students.

Groups with which the council may work cooperatively include the following:

- State Board for Vocational Education.
- Vocational education associations--found in all states, usually affiliated with the American Vocational Association, sponsor conferences and other professional development activities.
- Local, area, or regional vocational education administrators--may or may not be formally organized, but often participate in state inservice education meetings. May have several groups such as community college deans, area vocational school administrators, area or regional directors, and departmental chairpersons.
- Local vocational education advisory council members--seldom organized beyond the local area.
- University vocational education personnel.
- State vocational education staff plus staff of community college board, higher education boards, and/or boards of education, if separate from vocational education board who work with vocational education.

General Education Community. During the past 2 or 3 years, nearly every state council has advocated improved coordination and increased partnerships of vocational education with academic or general education as a means of enhancing the academic competencies of vocational education graduates. It seems appropriate that if we advocate this relationship, we must develop a rapport or liaison relationship with that segment which is conducive to creating these partnerships.

Recent emphasis on the need for basic academic skills has probably brought the vocational education community and the general education community closer together than any other factor. The extent to which this is happening varies among states. A number of conditions enter into the picture. Some conditions create barriers while others are facilitating in nature. The following list of conditions and examples may be helpful for assessment and comprehension of this relationship in your state. Coordination often emerges as a solution to a problem. Several factors affect this coordination.

- Single State Board for General Education and Vocational Education. The structure implies a policy of vocational education being an integral part of the total educational process. Conversely, separate boards imply separation of the two, thus requiring coordination to be a conscious process.

- Decline of School-Age Population. As enrollments decline, per pupil reimbursements provide fewer dollars and staff reductions often result. The education community may work together to save teachers' jobs or take advantage of smaller class sizes to improve instruction, or they may be polarized as they scramble to protect their own turf.

- Increasing Academic Requirements for Graduation. Coupled with declining enrollments, having less time in the school day to participate in vocational education has resulted in a secondary enrollment decline for vocational education. Increasingly, vocational educators are attempting to work with the general education community to determine if vocational education can be substituted for some mathematics, science, and language arts requirements.

- Employer Criticism of Vocational Education Having Graduates Who Are Deficient in Academic Skills. This criticism is causing vocational education to go to academic education for assistance in how to integrate and enhance teaching of "basics" in vocational education, thus acknowledging the need to work together.

- More Students in Advanced Academic Courses. Increased graduation requirements are causing many students who had been taking minimum academic courses to take advanced courses. Many of the students are there reluctantly. Teachers are finding they need to change traditional instruction methods and are seeking assistance from vocational education for using methods of application.

The kinds of individuals and groups within the general education community with whom state councils want to develop cooperative liaisons differ from state to state because of organizational structures. Some generic examples include state associations for local boards of education, community college boards or state education boards not designated as the state board for vocational education, education departments in universities, boards of higher education, special education cooperatives and teacher groups, and state associations of principals and superintendents.

Liaison-building activities with the general education community include the following:

- Select activities suggested above for working with vocational education which are also appropriate for working with general education.
- Develop a mailing list for general education individuals and groups to use in disseminating council newsletters, publications, and other information.
- Encourage vocational education to provide the general education community with information.
- Assist the general education community to become aware of how vocational and general education affect each other, thus creating a need for relationships between the two.
- Participate in statewide conferences and sponsor vocational education sessions.
- Conduct public hearings in conjunction with statewide conferences to get input from participants.
- Co-sponsor studies to obtain information of mutual benefit.

Governmental agencies. Each state will have its own names for agencies, but there are similarities in the types of state agencies. Even though responsibilities will be grouped differently, state agencies are generally of two types. One is a branch of the governor's office and is administered through that office. The second is separated from the governor's office and generally administered by appointed or elected officials or boards.

A state agency directory is helpful in sorting out what may seem to be a maze of agencies. Those of particular interest to the council have responsibility for the following:

- Job Training Partnership Act agencies
- Human resource development
- Economic/community development (some states have agencies for small business)
- Labor, apprenticeship, job or employment services
- Corrections

- Rehabilitation services

- Licensing and/or certification

Other state agencies (or departments within agencies) may be of interest to the council for specific issue-related topics. Examples may include those with responsibility for such areas as aging, drug and alcohol abuse, family and/or child services, women's concerns, and consumer concerns.

Liaison-building activities with governmental agencies include the following:

- Identify the state agencies and their primary missions.

- Determine which state agencies have interests and concerns common to those of the council; identify specific concerns.

- Review these agencies with members of the council to ascertain existing relationships on which to build.

- Be alert to activities, meetings, or other events that may provide an opportunity to discuss mutual interests with staff or other agencies.

- Recognize that appropriate relationships may be periodic and do not require routine initiation.

- Communicate using exchange of information.

Legislative relationships. Perhaps nothing varies as widely from state to state as the manner in which state councils work with their state legislatures and with their U.S. Senators and Representatives. However, some general guidelines and suggestions are applicable across state lines.

State councils are funded with federal funds. Some state councils also receive state funds. The use of federal funds for federal lobbying is not an allowable expenditure of funds. To understand the councils' role in the legislative process, it is necessary to understand the process itself.

Many fine illustrations and discussions about how bills are introduced, amended, and eventually passed into laws are available. The NAS/CoVE Handbook (Chapter VIII) is one resource. State councils in Alaska and New Mexico have developed materials they are willing to share. The state vocational associations and many other state and national level associations also make this information available for staff and council review and use.

The councils' involvement with legislative bodies is for the purpose of providing information. This is not a term to cover up "lobbying" efforts, but a term to be taken at face value. State legislatures, as well as our federal lawmakers often request state councils to come to testify. This request is made as a means of acquiring information. Lobbying has legal definitions and requires registration in most states. Staff should clearly understand these definitions and terms.

Webster defines a lobbyist as "one who tries to get a legislator to vote in favor of his [her] special interests." The phrase "tries to get a vote" is the key phrase. If a council presents its findings along with its conclusions and recommendations, the council is providing information. The key is to provide the information and not to "try to get. . . ." For the most part, when councils provide information routinely it is helpful to the legislator in considering emerging issues, not to determine his or her vote on a bill. Problems may arise for councils when issues are controversial.

For the purpose of this discussion, it is important to know the players. The legislative branch at both the state and federal levels is made up of elected officials with employed staff to assist in their work (in a manner similar to that of the governor's office). Legislative staff may provide services to a committee, a political party, an individual member, or the legislative body as a whole. Services provided include administrative, clerical, legal, information, or others needed for carrying out their responsibilities.

Personnel who have responsibility for keeping elected officials apprised of information related to various topics and issues are known as aides, advisors, or staff. It is with these individuals that councils usually work. Councils provide staff with information they can use to apprise those for whom they work.

Liaison-building activities with legislatures include the following:

- Provide information and data collected by the council as they become available on a routine basis. This makes it a regular service, not an attempt to get a vote.
- Develop liaison relationships with legislative staff for education and labor committees and budget or financial committees. These people need the information most.
- Discuss council information with legislators or staff.
- Be prompt in gathering additional information when it is requested.
- Become knowledgeable of research activities being conducted by legislative staff to avoid duplication or assist if appropriate.
- Ask what kinds of information they need or would find helpful in their work.
- Invite legislators and staff to address the council on key issues.
- Encourage members to voice their concerns and interests as private citizens to their legislators.

Federal-Level Liaisons

Liaisons established between the state council and federal-level groups are important. The effectiveness of the council may not be as directly enhanced as it will be with state-level liaisons, but good working relationships may be extremely helpful to council staff. The development of these is not particularly time consuming.

A listing of these federal-level groups follows below. A brief discussion of each, its role and relationship to state councils, and some suggestions to staff are included with each. Additional information, names, addresses, and phone numbers are in Chapter V of the NAS/CoVE Handbook.

U.S. Department of Education

The USED has responsibility for state council compliance. The Office of Vocational and Adult Education provides technical assistance to state councils, particularly in terms of federal reports required by the councils.

Staff should build effective and friendly relations with the vocational education staff of the USED who work directly with the council. New executive directors will want to call and introduce themselves to the staff. You may wish to ask the staff to review your state's file and visit with you about improving reports sent to that office.

When new support staff responsible for federal reports, particularly financial, are brought on board, a telephone call to clarify questions will not only expedite the time council staff has to spend on these and diminish time required of USED staff, but also may make the difference in whether or not funds can be released to flow to the state in a timely manner.

The USED should be included in the council's mailing list to receive copies of council publications in addition to those reports required to be submitted to them. Staff members of USED are often in attendance at regional and national vocational education meetings. State council staff should take advantage of these opportunities to get acquainted and introduce council members to them. They are knowledgeable of nationwide emerging issues and initiatives, thus are valuable resources.

U.S. Department of Labor

State councils are required to submit reports to the Secretary of Labor about their findings and recommendations relevant to the adequacy and effectiveness of vocational education and the coordination of JTPA and vocational education. Other reports and publications of the council may be useful to the Department of Labor because of their responsibility to JTPA programs. Although councils do not work directly with this department, opportunities to build positive relationships will ultimately serve to improve coordination between vocational education and JTPA, more particularly state councils on vocational education and state Job Training Coordination Councils.

National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education (NAS/CoVE)

The NAS/CoVE is an association for state councils. All state councils are members. Communications of the association generally are sent to council offices for distribution to members. Staff of state councils should take an active role in the association. It provides an opportunity to exchange ideas with staff from other states and is a vehicle for staff development. The NAS/CoVE *Handbook* provides additional information about the association, as well as resource materials for council use.

National Council on Vocational Education (N/CoVE)

The National Council on Vocational Education was established by the Perkins Act to advise the President and Congress. The national and state councils have no mandated responsibilities to each other, but do desire to communicate, exhange information, and support each other's efforts.

State councils are urged to develop a positive relationship with the National Council. Council publications and information should be forwarded to the National Council office. State councils may wish to include National Council members on their mailing lists for newsletters and major publications. In addition, states having a member of the National Council may wish to extend a special invitation to that person to attend State council meetings or to participate in dialogue with them on national and state issues. Chapter V of the NAS/CoVE *Handbook* provides additional information about the National Council, plus a listing of its members.

National Center for Research in Vocational Education

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, commonly known as the National Center, is located at The Ohio State University and is currently funded under the Perkins Act. Chapter V of the NAS/CoVE *Handbook* describes the mission and activities of the National Center. Chapter VI contains numerous examples of the kinds of resources available from the National Center.

State council offices are automatically on the National Center's mailing list to receive their newsletter (which announces workshops and new products) and catalog. The National Center can provide many services at a minimal cost.

Staff at the National Center are knowledgeable of nearly all research and initiatives that are taking place. They are willing to help you find it or put you in touch with people who are knowledgeable about the topic. If you are conducting a state study and want to find out what is happening in other states on the topic, the National Center will be your best resource.

Two items from the National Center are recommended as "musts" for all council offices. The first is a series titled "Research You Can Use--Need Some Facts." It is a lay-language publication series, 4-8 pages (5 x 8 size) and available to state council offices and members at no cost. Another series that is available at a very low annual subscription rate is Facts & Findings. Issued quarterly, it is in newsletter format and summarizes research related to vocational and technical education.

Many state councils participate in the National Center's ADVOCNET. This online communications network of federal, state and local vocational and technical personnel is an electronic mail system for transmitting messages, documents, and meeting and product announcements, as well as offering electronic publications and bulletin boards. Nearly all state boards participate. State councils can access their services or obtain their own "mailbox." For additional information, see the NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter V, page 21; call the National Center; or contact your state director of vocational education.

Council staff are urged to participate in activities sponsored by the National Center or its Academy (which provides staff development activities). Council members will also find these activities valuable.

Other National Organizations

National trade and professional organizations provide a wealth of information about vocational and technical education useful to staff of state councils. Membership and/or participation in conferences and workshops will contribute to the professional growth of staff. Examples of these include American Vocational Association (AVA), American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), National Alliance of Business (NAB), and American Society of Association Executives (ASAE).

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act; Section 112 (c) indicates: "Each State council shall meet as soon as practical after certification has been accepted by the Secretary. . . . The . . . council operating procedures and staffing, shall be as provided by the rules of the State council. . . ."

The chapter on Administration and Organization of Council Activities deals with how staff can assist the council in carrying out their mandated responsibilities efficiently and effectively. This chapter concerns itself with policies, procedures, and practices that are established by the council itself to provide direction for both staff and council members.

Formally adopted policies are needed for some areas with which the council concerns itself. Procedures may be developed to establish a step-by-step process, often serving as a checklist for completing an activity. Practices can best be described as "the way we do things." Practices are seldom in writing, but in the minds of staff and members, they may carry the same weight as an officially adopted policy. Although practice can be changed, all the "resistance to change" emotions may surface.

Personnel Policies

All state councils should have personnel policies on file. A brief listing of items that may be included is provided to assist a council wishing to revise its policies. States differ in the process used to revise or develop personnel policies. Council bylaws may establish the process, or the policies themselves will have a provision.

A personnel committee may be appointed at large from the council or it may be composed of the executive committee/officers of the council. Staff involvement in the process of revision is usually through the executive director, unless another process is specified.

Examples of items that should be addressed in personnel policies include the following:

- Explanation of procedures used to establish and revise policy
- Personnel covered by the policy
- Recruitment, selection, and hiring practices
- Use of reference checks, interviews, and competency testing

- Status of existing personnel in applying for vacancies
- Authority for decisions for various positions
- Salary ranges and/or scales, authority for recommendation and approval
- Staff involvement in personnel policy adoptions and revisions
- Fringe benefits, conditions, and allowances
- Responsibility for job descriptions and personnel evaluation
- Implications for performance reviews, such as probation, dismissal, merit pay, and salary adjustments
- Effective dates of salary increases, fringe benefits, earned vacation, disability, sick leave, and other leaves
- Work schedules and lunch and break periods
- Paycheck distribution
- Official and religious holidays
- Vacation schedules, accumulation and transfer, pay for unused days
- Leaves of absences (sick days, personal, illness or injury, campaign, court, professional development, voting, elected office, bereavement, educational, child care, and communication action), conditions, duration, status of pay, benefits, accumulation of tenure, and extensions
- Personal leave
- Standards of conduct/code of ethics
- Records of the employees, confidentiality and review
- Grievance procedures
- Resignation and termination of employment, exit interviews

Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits vary greatly among the states. The Utah council staff periodically surveys staff of state councils to collect salary and fringe benefit information. Examples of fringe benefit packages provided by councils include the following:

- Worker compensation
- Coverage under Unemployment Compensation Act
- Retirement (i.e., state employees, education, social security, and private pension plans)
- Life insurance (which may be maintained by employee after leaving the council's employ)
- Medical and dental insurance and family coverage
- Car allowance
- Membership dues in professional organizations
- Car provided (leased, rented, state vehicle pool)
- Tuition reimbursements
- Bonus payment, bonus travel package
- Credit card for business expenses
- Individual Retirement Account
- Complimentary entertainment tickets
- Sabbatical
- Leave with pay to perform vocational education services and studies, serve as a consultant, conduct workwhops, or deliver speeches for which compensation is also provided
- Annuity programs
- Investment programs

Job Descriptions

All staff of the state council should have a job description on file. These may not be adopted as a policy would be, but serve as a form of policy to provide direction to staff. The preparation and revision of a job description is an administrative or staff responsibility; however, the council usually endorses them in some manner. (They may be provided in bylaws or personnel policy.) Job descriptions are generally the basis for job performance evaluations.

Job descriptions for the major staff roles as described in the chapter on council staff are provided here as examples. The content would need to be adjusted to fit particular state situations.

Executive director. The executive director provides the following job functions for the council as they relate to vocational and technical education:

- Serve directly responsible to the council.
- Serve as the official spokesperson for the council.
- Employ office staff to carry out functions for council, supervise staff, and make recommendations for staff salary and promotion to the council.
- Prepare annual tentative budgets for review by the council.
- Submit budget to appropriate federal offices and provide for necessary requests of the fiscal agent.
- Supervise information needed for preparation of reports pursuant to council direction.
- Provide leadership, development, and consolidation of activities as they relate to mandates.
- Provide leadership to the council for establishing and carrying out its goals and objectives through a plan of work.
- Determine financial procedures, accounting, and reporting of state and federal funds allocated to the council within the approved appropriation limitations and designation of signature authority among staff.
- Prepare or direct staff to draft appropriate policy recommendations for improving vocational education for review by council.
- Direct staff in making arrangements and necessary preparations for council activities such as council meetings, committee meetings, public hearings, and other activities sponsored by council or with which council is involved.
- Prepare (initiate where appropriate) letters, memoranda, questionnaires, requests for proposal, documents, informative materials and brochures, position papers at the request of the council.
- Plan and organize public hearings and conferences with the public, including representatives from business, industry, labor, agriculture, and targeted populations and groups to gather data and collect input for reports and recommendations needed by the council and its members.
- Develop and maintain a liaison (serve on committees representing the council) with all educational and government agencies and private sector organizations with responsibilities and interests in vocational and technical education and employment and training.

- Advise the council on current issues and innovative practices related to council functions.

- Serve as an ex-officio member of the council's committees.

- Provide orientation for new council members.

- Work directly with the council chair and/or committees designated by the chair for determining responsibilities and activities that arise between meetings of the council.

- Perform other responsibilities assigned by the council.

Associate or assistant executive director. An associate or assistant executive director has major responsibility for assisting the executive director. A sample job description might include the following functions:

- Serve directly responsible to the executive director.

- Carry out responsibilities for office operations as assigned by the executive director.

- Collect council activity costs for executive director in budget development.

- Work with executive director in finalizing and coordinating submission to federal offices and requests of the fiscal agent.

- Acquire information for reports on vocational education, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), or others as needed. Responsibilities include the following:

    - Coordinating input activities for council reports
    - Acquiring appropriate data from various sources
    - Monitoring or conducting assigned research studies
    - Coordinating council input resulting from their participation in the evaluation process
    - Working with committees as assigned
    - Developing reports and publications
    - Publishing newsletters and other council information

- Draft council's plan of work, maintain progress data, and provide periodic update to council.

- Coordinate office staff for facility arrangements and preparation of appropriate materials for council activities, meetings, hearings, and committees.

- Develop correspondence, position papers, brochures, and documents as requested.

- Provide staff services and leadership for council committees as requested.
- Assist executive director by collecting and providing appropriate information for advising the council on current issues, innovative practices, and so forth.
- Develop materials for presentation of council reports and activities.
- Attend executive committee meetings at the request of the executive director.
- Perform other responsibilities as assigned by the executive director.
- Serve as directed by executive director in the event of temporary absence of the director.

Research associate or evaluation specialist. A research associate or evaluation specialist has responsibility for carrying out functions related to those activities. A sample job description might include the following:

- Serve directly responsible to the executive director.
- At the direction of the council's plan of work, plan, develop, and carry out research/evaluation activities needed by the council.
- Monitor contracts and/or supervise research activities.
- Keep accurate records of activity costs.
- Report findings to council and work with council to prepare their position on the findings.
- Draft, for council review and approval, such items as findings, conclusions, recommendations, and other important information needed for the council's report.
- Prepare final information for publication.
- Work with staff and council committees to incorporate public hearings and council member expertise in developing the plan for research activities.
- Apprise the executive director of recommended future research.

Administrative assistant or executive secretary. The position of administrative assistant or executive secretary is increasingly popular with state councils. This person often doubles as additional secretarial staff. A sample job description follows.

Report to the executive director and provide services to assistant or associate executive director, as directed.

- Fiscal Management--assist director in preparation of state and federal budgets:

  - Project line items.
  - Determine budget.
  - Submit budget.
  - Monitor state legislation regarding budget.
  - Advise director regarding overall financial matters.
  - Maintain liaison with Branch Financial Officer and U. S. Department of Education, Division of Cash Outlays.

- Accounting Responsibilities:

  - Prepare and maintain records on all council accounting transactions providing liaison with accounting section of fiscal agent.
  - Prepare council monthly and quarterly financial reports.
  - Prepare and process travel vouchers for staff and council members.
  - Prepare out-of-state travel requests for staff and council members.
  - Prepare and process purchase requisitions, invoice vouchers, and agreements for contractual service.
  - Maintain service contracts on office equipment.

- Office Responsibilities:

  - Serve as office manager and supervise office staff in absence of executive director and assistant/associate.
  - Assign work to other support staff.
  - Compose memos, reports, and correspondence.
  - Review council mail, highlighting items for attention of other staff.
  - Ensure that correspondence is answered and deadlines are met.
  - Maintain personnel files on council staff, maintain files on council members and vendor contracts, also maintain council certification information.
  - Make travel arrangements for staff.
  - Maintain vacation and sick leave log for office staff.
  - Answer requests from public for information and reports (verbal and written).
  - Keep up-to-date list of terminology and acronyms.
  - Serve as additional secretary, as needed.

- Council Activities:

  - Arrange for council and committee meeting facilities, meeting materials, microphones, seating, and meal functions.
  - Attend all council meetings and be responsible for all minutes.
  - Make travel and lodging arrangements for council.
  - Obtain a list of pre-council meeting correspondence from executive director/assistant and arrange for preparation and mailing.
  - Obtain a list of materials for council packets and arrange for packet preparation and distribution.

- Council Publications:

  -- Proofread all publications prior to printing.
  -- Prepare bid request proposals for printing and follow through after contract award until publication is received.

- Other Duties as Assigned:

  -- Perform other duties as assigned by director/and or assistant necessary to carry out the functions of the office.

Secretary. The position of secretary may include many responsibilities assigned to the administrative assistant, depending on the competencies and skills of the individual. The following are typical functions:

- Provide secretarial service including taking dictation, operating word processor, and typing. Work will include letters, drafts of reports, notices of meetings, agendas, minutes, and so on.

- Attend council meetings, assist with or provide for arrangements, and take minutes.

- Transcribe tapes of council meetings and forums.

- Take minutes of committee meetings, when requested.

- Serve as office receptionist--greeting visitors, answering phones, and placing phone calls.

- Open, log, and distribute mail.

- Maintain general files, locate files for staff as needed.

- Maintain activity files of council committees.

- Maintain supply and storage areas, order supplies when needed.

- Operate and arrange for service of copy equipment, word processing equipment, postage meter, and other office equipment.

- Keep council library and data files up to date.

- Keep all council mailing lists current.

- Disseminate council reports/studies keeping accurate records.

- Prepare meeting packets and pre-meeting materials, mailing these materials, minutes, and agendas, to members and others designated.

- Proofread documents with other staff.

- Establish office systems for maximum efficiency.
- Assist with training other office personnel to use the word processing system.
- Perform other duties necessary to carry out the functions of the office, as assigned by staff.
- Report to executive director and provide services to assistant/associate executive director and others as directed.

Conference Participation

Although out-of-state conference participation can do a great deal to keep council members informed of critical issues related to their council role, it is also a costly item for limited council budgets. It can also be a point of contention among council members if they are not actively involved in the process and fully aware of their own participation opportunities.

A set of guidelines for in-state conference participation may also be necessary, but members usually attend in-state conferences that are related to their own employment interests, thus providing necessary feedback to the council. The problem for in-state conferences may be one of ensuring that the council has representation.

Out-of-state conference participation of staff members is an administrative responsibility of the executive director, as determined by staff assignments, job descriptions, and budgetary constraints. Staff travel may also be influenced by regulations of the fiscal agent. (See chapter on Council Finances, fiscal agent section.)

Following are out-of-state conference participation guidelines. The first part deals with determining which conferences will be approved and how members are selected. The second part describes the participant's responsibilities.

Selection Procedure

Identifying conferences. At the end of each fiscal year, staff will compile a list of conference dates, locations, and estimated expenditures. (Chapter V of the NAS/CoVE Handbook provides a listing of possible conferences. Addresses are located in Chapter VI.) Members will assist by notifying staff of conferences they recommend be added to the list by providing dates, locations, and if possible, estimated expenses.

Establishing conferences. The executive committee reviews the list and submits to the council by the first meeting of each fiscal year its recommendations regarding which conferences are appropriate for council representation and the number of members to be sponsored by the council to each conference.

At its first meeting the council approves, subject to adjustment, the number of sponsorships recommended by the executive committee. Members present may indicate their preferences. Staff sends the approved list to all members the week following the council meeting.

Council members have 30 days from the date of mailing to inform staff, by mail or phone, of the conference(s) for which they wish to be sponsored.

Limitations. Members shall be sponsored to no more than three conferences per year.

Priorities. If there are more requests to attend a conference than the number of sponsorships approved, the following order of priority shall be used subject to the provisions of the fifth item:

- Conference presenter on program agenda (limited to eligible expenditures not reimbursed by the conference), or a person in, or seeking, a leadership role in the organization
- Council chair
- Council chair-elect
- Executive committee members
- Conference content similarities related first to the members' council responsibilities and second to the members' employment responsibility
- Tenure on ICoVE, if attendance at meetings has averaged 75 percent, or contributions to the council have been significant
- If more than four individuals have been approved to attend a conference, a first-year member (or a member who has not previously attended or been sponsored to a conference) shall be sponsored in the fifth slot providing conditions in the fifth and sixth items above are met

Conference "slots" not filled at the end of 30 days may be filled on a first-come, first-served basis provided the member's attendance record is satisfactory or by a member who has not previously attended or been sponsored to a conference.

Exceptions and changes. Participation in nonrecurring conferences scheduled late in the fiscal year shall be determined by the chair based on availability of resources and the spirit of previously stated conditions. Requests should be through staff. The chair may elect to poll the officers and/or executive committee.

Any request from members for changes, exceptions, or alterations not otherwise provided for shall be directed to the chair whose decision shall be based upon the efficient use of resources and in keeping with the spirit of the previously stated conditions. Staff shall keep a record of the requests and decisions that are a matter of public record.

Responsibilities of Council Members

Volunteer. Assist staff in preparing list of conferences by providing dates, location, purpose, registration fees, and so on.

Travel expenses. Indicate your participation interests in accordance with the guidelines for conference participation.

Seek additional funding sources to help defray costs to council that could be used to sponsor another council member. In most instances, the person will acquire information that is also beneficial to his or her employer. Employers are often willing to pay part of the expenses.

Members are expected to use the most efficient and economical travel arrangements possible. Car pooling, where practical, is encouraged.

Make own travel arrangements.

Provide the following to the council office 4-6 weeks prior to conference:

- Travel costs and departure/return times
- Lodging costs
- Registration fees
- Other expenses such as taxi, materials to be purchased, and so on

(Staff must request out-of-state travel approval from the fiscal agent.)

Reimbursement cannot exceed the amount requested. Staff will add per diem allowance. Members cannot charge expenses to the council (such as plane tickets). If registration fees are extremely expensive, there is a process to direct bill this, providing the information and request is submitted at least a month in advance.

Reporting. Report about the conference to the council at the next meeting. The report should include the following:

- Key topics and issues discussed
- Trends and their implications for the council
- Resources (such as materials available from other states, follow-up workshops, speakers that might be invited to council meetings, and so forth)

A written report is not an absolute requirement, but is is strongly encouraged. Reports may be a narrative or a simple list of 5-10 key concepts.

The oral report given at the council meeting should fit the allotted time on the agenda. (The agenda shows the time frame and number of persons reporting.) If you feel your report needs more time than the agenda normally allows, please contact staff a couple of weeks prior to the meeting so extra time can be scheduled.

Written reports can be included in meeting packets if sent to staff in advance or can be mailed to members after the meeting.

If members attend a conference sponsored by another funding source and feel information gained would be useful to the council, they should notify staff so their report can be scheduled on the agenda.

Public relations. Help the council increase its visibility and establish good liaison relationships with other groups through the following:

- If the council funds the trip, register and show affiliation as a state council member rather than your business, agency, or school district.
- You may be attending the conference at your employer's expense or as a representative of your occupation and area of expertise. Conference participants are often asked to introduce themselves and tell whom they represent. Please indicate you are also a member of the state council on vocational education.
- Many council members receive personal publicity through the media or are introduced as a speaker or special guest. Include your membership on the state council when providing information for introductions, interviews, etc. You may also want to indicate council responsibilities and leadership responsibilities.
- Distribute council business cards as you would your own business card when you travel.

State Council Handbook

Handbooks usually contain independent procedures and policies followed by the council. They are seldom formally adopted by a council, but most of their parts have been at one time or another.

Construction of the handbook and annual updates of its contents are staff functions. If a state council does not have a handbook, staff may wish to suggest that one be developed, although this is an activity for which staff may certainly take the initiative and provide to the council.

If the council has already suggested to the staff that a handbook be compiled, a listing is included in this section to help you get started. If a council committee has been appointed to assist, they may wish to review, revise, and adopt the outline or perhaps each member could take a section to develop.

Putting together a handbook is not as simple as it sounds. What usually happens is that you discover materials that should be included have not been fully developed or are in need of revision so you end up writing and developing much of the content. Policies often remain as part of council minutes and will have to be searched. The project will consume a great deal of support staff's time.

The following list contains information (taken mostly from the Iowa Handbook) that may be helpful components in a state council handbook. Some is found in the NAS/CoVE Handbook and may not need to be repeated.

- Council Goals and Objectives
  - Council philosophy
  - Council goals and objectives
  - Council mandates of the Perkins Act (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII)
  - Diagram of relationship of mandates to council goals and objectives
  - Summary of council role and functions (for use as a handout)
- Council Membership
  - Council and staff directory, public and confidential, preferred mailing
  - Biographical sketch of council members
- Council Structure
  - Committee structure
  - Committee goals, objectives, and activity summary
  - Diagram of committee goals showing relationship to goals, objectives, and mandates of council
  - Organization charts showing council relationship to various agencies, offices and boards to whom they report or with whom they work
- Council Activity Schedules
  - Council meeting schedule, committee meetings schedules
  - Calendar of council-related events, regional and national meetings (NAS/CoVE meetings, Chapter III of Handbook)
  - Calendar of events, liaison groups, such as vocational education community, the JTPA community
  - List of council approved out-of-state conferences (possible considerations, see NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter V)
  - Scheduled reports of committees, vendors, or others to council
- Council Plan of Work/Committee Activities
  - Work plan reflecting process, time frames, and cost estimates for attaining council goals. This may be the culmination of committee work plans.

- -- Activity sections, related to council goals/objectives of the plan of work, that might include coordination with JTPA, private sector initiatives, high school dropouts, distribution of funds, State plan, technical committees. Each activity section would include committee reports, activities, calendar, and membership; reports of issues addressed at conferences related to the activity; and research and studies and related data.
- -- Coordination chart showing the relationship of the committees to the overall mission of the council. Descriptions of how committees feed into or affect the council's mission should be included.

o Policies and Procedures

- -- Council bylaws
- -- Council policies, such as--
  - -- personnel
  - -- travel
  - -- research and studies
  - -- public hearing
  - -- development of liaison relationships
  - -- expenditure of funds
- -- Council practices (if not part of plan of work or policy)--
  - -- participation with other organizations
  - -- recognition of achievement
  - -- reporting practices, to governor, state board, and others

o Business Transactions

- -- Council budget
- -- Council minutes, current year
- -- Summaries of council minutes (action items), previous years

o Legislation, rules and regulations

- -- State (highlighted and/or summarized as appropriate)--
  - -- vocational education legislation
  - -- elementary, secondary, postsecondary, adult, higher education that relates or affects vocational education, such as community colleges, dropout, alternative, bilingual, General Educational Development, area vocational schools.
  - -- education budget
  - -- public meetings
  - -- enabling legislation
  - -- economic development
  - -- labor laws
  - -- employment and training

-- Federal (highlighted and/or summarized as appropriate)--

  - -- Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII)
  - -- Job Training Partnership Act (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII)
  - -- Special Education Amendments
  - -- Civil Rights regulations for vocational education

o Council Correspondence

- -- Letters of advice to Governor, State Board, JTCC, and others
- -- Information (testimony) letters to legislators from council or its members
- -- Requests, with accompanying response, for clarification or interpretations of legislation, policies, and so on
- -- Responses to council recommendations

o Council Reports

- -- Executive summaries
- -- Highlights of council recommendations
- -- Findings and conclusions of council studies
- -- Data summaries

o Information on Related Agencies and Organizations

- -- Organizational charts of state agencies
- -- Directories of board, councils, committees and commission members (state board, special education advisory community, JTCC members, SOICC members, legislative commissions and committees, postsecondary board members, association staff and officers)
- -- Summary notations describing major responsibilities of agencies and organization

o National or Federal Information

- -- Directory of U.S. Departments of Education and Labor staff with whom the council works (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter V)
- -- Information highlights about the National Council on Vocational Education (NAS/CoVE Handbook)
- -- Information about national organizations with whom state councils work such as NAB, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, AACJC, AVA, ASTD (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter V)
- -- Information about the National Association of State Councils on Vocational Education

o Other Helpful Information

- -- Acronym lists (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter X)
- -- Definitions (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapters VII and X)

- -- "Copy ready" summaries of council activities, legislation summary (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII) and other information useful as handouts or transparancies when making presentations
- -- Sample letters for corresponding with elected officials (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter VIII)
- -- Historical summaries of legislation (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter IX)
- -- Sample travel forms
- -- Former council members
- -- Format outline for reporting conference participation to council
- -- Position statements from other groups (NAS/CoVE Handbook, Chapter IV)
- -- Summaries of proposed legislation, bill numbers, and so on

Bylaws

Bylaws of state councils should be based on the guidelines of parliamentary procedures followed by the state. If a state council is established in the state's laws by legislation, state regulations regarding format will need to be followed in preparing bylaws. Bylaws and any revisions made to them may need to be processed through appropriate state procedures and reviewing agencies. State councils most likely to be established through state law are those receiving state funding in addition to federal funding. State councils may be in state law if their federal funds must go through the state's legislature for approval or authorization to be spent.

Following are examples of major content areas of state council bylaws. The NAS/CoVE Bylaws may also serve as an example. These are located in Chapter III of the NAS/CoVE Handbook. State councils are willing to share their bylaws. Most council offices have examples from other states in their files.

Suggested content of state council bylaws includes the following:

- o Name of council, acronym, motto, slogan

- o Council goals, purpose, mission statement (goals often closely align to the goals of federal legislation for vocational education)

- o Statutory authority (quote of federal and/or state legislation)

- o Statutory responsibility (may quote the federal and/or state assigned responsibilities)

- o Operational procedures--

  - -- How the council is certified
  - -- How the council establishes policy, what policies will be established
  - -- How the council develops and uses its plan of work

- Membership of the council, may be listed as described in federal legislation--
  - -- Appointing authority
  - -- Term of service
  - -- Responsibilities for participation and reporting
- Officers, responsibilities, and elections--
  - -- Identifies officers to be elected, term of service
  - -- Describes responsibility, including executive committee, committee chairs
  - -- Outlines election process including nominations, date, voting, filling vacancies
- Committees--
  - -- Establishes committees and their responsibility
  - -- Outlines or states purposes
- Meetings--
  - -- Describes manner in which meetings are conducted
  - -- Indicates how time, place, and dates are established
  - -- Outlines the use of an agenda
  - -- Indicates level of public participation at meetings
  - -- Establishes quorum for conducting meetings
  - -- Provides for business transactions between meetings
- Staff--
  - -- Describes employment of executive director, who will employ other staff
  - -- States major function of executive director
  - -- Establishes use of personnel policies
- Fiscal management--
  - -- Indicates authority to select fiscal agent
  - -- Outlines responsibilities of fiscal agent
  - -- Authorizes use of financial policies
- Amendments to bylaws--
  - -- Sets out process for revision of bylaws

MEETING THE MANDATES

This chapter takes on a slightly different format from previous chapters. Each council mandate is stated as presented in the Perkins Act. The manner in which the council is to fulfill the mandate, such as a report, advice, or recommendations, is listed. These are aligned with the audience for the information.

Suggestions to assist councils in addressing their mandated responsibilities are also listed. The suggestions reflect topics or information that might be useful to council members as they plan work for fulfilling each mandate. The suggestions are presented as "idea-starters" and are not designed to provide a step-by-step process. Sample recommendations or advice are intentionally omitted so as to not bias the user. Suggestions are designed to spark ideas regardless of existing perceptions.

Process, procedure, suggestions, and helpful hints for examining the suggestions as stated can best be garnered from other chapters in the handbook such as the chapters on liaison relationships, council meetings, council staff, and administration and organization.

The importance of council involvement in the development and decisions pertaining to council activities is important as are variations among the states. Councils, like any group, sometimes get established in tradition and find it difficult to modify current procedures. The following ideas may help staff to provide leadership for alternative choices.

The mandated responsibilities described in this chapter are to "be performed at least once during the period covered by the State plan," unless otherwise indicated. The first state plan is for three program year periods (1984, 1985, 1986); subsequent plans are for two program year periods (1986-1987). Therefore, the first council reporting years include fiscal years 1984, 1985, and 1986, with the reports being due on March 31, 1987 (following year). The second report spans fiscal years 1987 and 1988, with reports due on March 31, 1989.

Public hearings and work with technical committees are required annually by the Perkins Act and its regulations. Consultation on the state plan is also required more frequently if amendments are proposed.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(1): "Each State council shall meet with the State board or its representatives during the planning year to advise on the development of the State plan."

Format: Advice   Audience: State board

Section 114 (b)(1): "Each State plan shall be submitted to the State council on vocational education for review and comment not later than 60 days prior to the submission of the plan to the Secretary."

Format: Comment Audience: State board

Section 114 (b)(2): "If the State council finds that the final State plan is objectionable the State council shall file its objections with the State board . . ."

Format: File objections Audience: State board

Meetings of the council and state board are usually between state board staff and council members and staff during the development stage. The board itself may not be involved until the state plan nears completion.

The state board may have a member or two who sit in on the planning meetings. Where a separate state board for vocational education exists, the board members themselves may assume a more active role. During the state planning cycle, the boards may devote major portions of their meetings to the state plan. Under these conditions, council members and board members may enter into direct idea exchanges.

Rapport between the council and the state board may be a major element in determining both the extent and kind of advice the council is able to provide. If the council has taken an adversarial posture, the meetings may be somewhat formalized and input may all be in written form.

Consultation. At some point, the council should convey in writing major points it makes to the state board during the planning development. This validates that consultation occurred, but is not a requirement. The council should express commendations as well as concerns. Consultation should occur during each 2-year planning cycle and should be given when amendments are made to the plan. Regulations clarify that it was the intent of the legislation that the council be involved during the development cycle.

Review. Section 114 (b)(1) of the Perkins Act requires that the "State plan be submitted to the State council on vocational education for review and comment not later than 60 days prior to the submission of the plan to the Secretary." Cover letters transmitting the plan to the council for review serve as documentation that this occurred. The council should record its comments in writing to the board as a means of verifying the review. The council minutes should also reflect that the review occurred.

Filing objections. Section 114 (b)(2) of the Perkins Acts states, "If the State council finds that the final State plan is objectionable for any reason, including that it does not meet labor market needs of the state, the State council shall file its objections with the State board." Usually, conflicting viewpoints or objections are resolved prior to the final plan, but if not, the council is required to file its objections, usually in the form of a letter to the board chair. If the council has truly been in a consultation mode with the state board, any unresolved objections should not surprise the board. The state board is not required to respond directly to the state council, but it must respond to the council's objections in submitting the plan to the Secretary of Education. The Perkins Act requires that the Secretary consider these comments in reviewing the plan.

Some suggestions for consulting with the state board on the development of the state plan include the following:

- Recognize that the planning process is an ongoing, not a short-term activity.
- Use a council committee to meet with state staff to discuss issues needing to be addressed in the plan.
- Encourage an atmosphere for open dialogue so that the state board staff can answer questions and clarify the impact of rules and regulations on the plan's content.
- Voice concerns from the beginning of the planning cycle to avoid objections to the final document.
- Work to resolve all issues prior to final document preparation.
- Attend public hearings conducted by the state board on the plan as observers.
- Forward council findings, conclusions, recommendations, and reports pursuant to other council mandates to state board staff who are involved in state plan development as the information becomes available. The information should be useful in early planning activities. They will appreciate being kept informed.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112, (d)(2)(A): "Each State council shall--advise the State board . . . concerning--policies the State should pursue to strengthen vocational education (with particular attention to programs for the handicapped). . . ."

Format: Advice Audience: State board

Format: Report Audience: Governor, business community, general public

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The advice pertaining to policies the state should pursue may result from a variety of studies conducted by the council or may be the focus of council study. Problems are often isolated and councils suggest solutions or make recommendations for change, but fail to address the overall policy issues that, if left unattended, are likely to cause a reoccurrence of these or similar issues.

The absence of policy frequently results in duplication or conflicting activities. Policy gives stature to an issue or topic, thus bringing it to the attention of the general public.

Policy recommendations may be made at varying levels. State councils tend toward addressing policy issues at the level of the state board and governor. Policies directed toward state board staff in vocational education (e.g., state director of vocational education, tend to be administrative and operational). Following are areas about which recommendations for varying levels of policy may surface:

- Preparation of handicapped individuals for employment
- Employment of handicapped individuals
- Responsibilities for preparing citizens for employment
- Retraining workers
- Public education through grade 12
- Cooperation among educational levels (articulation)
- Credit transfer
- Tuition responsibilities
- Teacher certification and credentialing
- Support of private sector training
- Incentives for economic development
- Partnerships between public and private sector
- Access to education and training
- Delivery systems for vocational education programs
- Delivery systems for state services and support
- Open opportunities
- Voucher systems
- Financial resources
- Use of advisory and study groups

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(2)(B): "Each State council shall--advise the state board . . . concerning--initiatives and methods the private sector could undertake to assist in the modernization of vocational education programs. . . ."

Format: Advice Audience: State board

Format: Report Audience: Governor, business community, general public

By advising the state board about "initiatives the private sector could undertake," the council is suggesting to the board the kinds of support and initiatives it needs to solicit from the private sector. This advice will also suggest to the board areas in which a shifting of responsibility needs to occur. As responsibilities shift, the state board's role and function will shift and be altered. The council's responsibility for reporting this advice to the governor, the business community, and general public should be helpful to the state board because it provides an awareness among the groups.

The list that follows does not contain sample recommendations. In fact, recommendations are not required. It focuses more on the kinds of information the council may seek in order to formulate advice and make these suggestions.

- Determine the extent to which vocational education is outdated and needs modernization including instruction, curriculum, and equipment.
- Study management trends being used by the private sector.
- Assess teacher awareness, knowledge, and/or competency for teaching about new practices and procedures being used in the workplace.
- Determine teacher competencies related to current job skills.
- Select model initiatives for updating teachers that incorporate the involvement of the private sector.
- Study curriculum development strategies being used that involve the private sector.
- Conduct public hearings to collect ideas from the private sector about how they can help.
- Survey teachers to identify their perceptions of needs to determine how the private sector might assist them.
- Assess the state-of-the-art of private sector involvement in local vocational education programs.
- Identify ways vocational education can "return the favor" to the private sector.

- Assess the availability of up-to-date equipment in the educational setting.
- Seek alternatives to the delivery of vocational education that could be provided by the private sector.
- Establish the availability of private sector facilities for use by vocational education.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(3): "Each State council shall--analyze and report on the distribution of spending for vocational education in the State and on the availability of vocational education activities and services within the State; . . ."

Format: Report   Audience: State board

This mandate has two parts. The first deals with an analysis of spending for vocational education. The second requires a look at the availability of services and activities for vocational education students. The Perkins Act does not identify to whom the council reports, but it is generally assumed that the state board would be the recipient. The report would probably be valuable to other audiences as well and may be of particular interest to the governor and to local educational personnel.

Following are several ideas that may assist councils in their analysis of these two areas.

- Spending
    - Compare the state allocation and local spending of funds.
    - Determine "roadblocks" that may result in local education agencies not spending their allocated allotment for various activities.
    - Ask local educational agencies why they sometimes don't spend all of the funds allocated.
    - Conduct hearings to find out areas for which local educational agencies need increased funding.
    - Assess whether or not local educational agencies use available funds to target problem areas in order to find solutions.
    - Interview local school board members to determine how they determine use of vocational education funds provided by the act.
- Activities and Services
    - Develop a listing of all activities and services provided by the state vocational education agencies (research, inservices, curriculum development, guidance services, and so forth).
    - Compile a list of activities and services provided by other state, federal, and local programs.

- -- Assess local school board members to determine their awareness of needed programs and services.
- -- Compare the above listings to determine the availability and accessibility of programs and services.
- -- Conduct a public hearing to identify services and activities not readily available.
- -- Assess the availability and use of vocational education services and activities by targeted populations.
- -- Conduct follow-up studies of newly developed and implemented successful activities to determine whether or not these can be expanded to other school districts.
- -- Determine whether or not funds are available for needed services and activities.
- -- Evaluate and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the state's vocational student organizations.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(4): "Each State council shall--furnish consultation to the State board on the establishment of evaluation criteria for vocational education programs within the State; . . ."

Format: Consultation Audience: State board

In consulting with the state board on the establishment of evaluation criteria, the council should present useful information to the board. There are a variety of related studies the council may wish to conduct that will generate information.

The council may wish to work with the state board prior to the development of the criteria in order to identify information needed in the decision-making process. Because of its accessibility to the general public, the council may be an excellent resource for soliciting the needed information.

Some suggested studies that may produce information useful to the state board follow. The listing is not inclusive, and states may vary significantly in their process for carrying out this mandate.

- o Establish a council committee to work with the state board in an advisory capacity as the evaluation system is being prepared.

- o Conduct a public hearing to compile suggestions from the general public and the private sector concerning the content of the evaluation requirement.

- o Ask to be apprised of local input and general public involvement in designing evaluation criteria.

- o Assess other states to obtain related evaluation criteria and processes.

- Develop a content outline or standards viewed by the council as appropriate in evaluating vocational education programs. Share these with vocational education staff.
- Survey JTPA personnel to ascertain quality indicators they seek when contracting for vocational education programs and services.
- Interview employers to acquire information they view as needed in the evaluation process.
- Ask state board staff to participate in a discussion with the council regarding evaluation.
- Work with the state staff in field testing new evaluation systems.
- Survey the vocational education community about what they believe should be incorporated in the state's system of evaluation.
- Ask the governor's office, the legislature, and others how they expect to use the evaluation reports.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(5): "Each State council shall--submit recommendations to the State board on the conduct of vocational education programs conducted in the State which emphasize the use of business concerns and labor organizations. . . ."

Format: Recommendations Audience: State board

A review of vocational education programs to determine the extent to which they are using the concerns of business and labor organizations in planning, developing, and delivering programs is necessary before recommendations can be drawn. Council activities related to other mandated responsibilities involving the private sector may also contribute to the pool of knowledge. As an efficiency measure, staff should help the council select activities related to private sector and vocational education partnerships, which can result in needed information pertinent to all three mandates.

Following are studies and activities that may be useful to councils in determining their recommendations:

- Solicit business and labor organizations' concerns through public hearings and surveys of local advisory councils.
- Identify quality programs that are the result of using business and labor concerns.
- Interview local personnel to determine how the use of business and labor concerns was initiated.

- Examine teacher preparation programs to determine whether or not vocational education teachers are prepared with the skills needed to incorporate business and labor concerns in their programs.
- Ascertain whether or not graduates possess skills needed by business and labor.
- Survey local personnel to determine whether or not they are knowledgeable of business and labor concerns.
- Publicize exemplary program models that meet business and labor needs and concerns.
- Review labor market information analyses from the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to determine matches and mismatches.
- Ask business and labor to identify desired characteristics of vocational education graduates.
- Compile a list of business and labor concerns, submit it to representatives of business and labor for rank ordering, and communicate these concerns to the state board.
- Ask business and labor to suggest ways in which vocational education could better meet their needs.
- Use the expertise of council members from the private sector.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(6): "Each State council shall--assess the distribution of financial assistance furnished under this Act, particularly with the analysis of the distribution of financial assistance between secondary vocational education programs and postsecondary vocational education programs. . . ."

Format: Report Audience: State board

The analysis of distribution of funds between secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs has the potential for developing into a controversial issue. There are a few words of caution that staff may wish to note.

First, the mandate states "under this Act," which means only those funds are analyzed. It is important to note that if the state uses quality planning techniques, other resources available at these two levels will have been considered in order to achieve maximum coordination of all funding resources. If the council fails to incorporate this information in their review, it may reach a conclusion that is not totally accurate or appropriate.

For example, some states choose to fund one level from federal funds and the other level from state funds. At first glance, it appears one level is not being supported, but further investigation would reveal it is simply supported with funds from a different resource.

Second, the council should be aware of federal criteria establishing formulas and other means of determining "how much money" a local program receives. The state's compliance is reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education; a council review would be a duplication of effort.

Third, funds are often used to drive initiatives. This is where controversy may emerge. In its analysis, the council should be cognizant of this. The issue the council may be addressing may be the degree of emphasis placed on the various levels and rationale for that emphasis.

Some ideas to assist councils in this undertaking follow:

- Review the allocation of funds to the various purposes of the Perkins Act.
- Align all state and federal resources that may "match" or assist funds of the Perkins Act to fulfill its purpose, i.e., state vocational education funds, adult education funds, JTPA, and rehabilitation. Determine if funds allocated by the Perkins Act duplicate or coordinate efforts from other sources. Compare these at both secondary and postsecondary levels.
- Compare allocated resources to distributed resources.
- Assess reasons why local educational agencies may not use funds allocated or distributed to it.
- Ask local educational agencies to identify needed services and programs not being provided because funds are not available.
- Seek shifts in trends of funds distributed. Determine if funds are driving priorities or if priorities are driving funds.
- Study an area of funding to determine if the funds are resulting in an impact.
- Where flexibility or state priorities may influence use of federal funds, suggest appropriate distribution.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(7): "Each State council shall--recommend procedures . . . to ensure and enhance the participation of the public in the provision of vocational education at the local level within the State, particularly the participation of local employers and local labor organizations. . . ."

Format: Recommendations   Audience: State board

This mandate asks the council to recommend ways to ensure that the private sector is involved in local programs. Probably more than any other mandate, this one addresses administrative policy issues. For the state board to be able to show that the public, local employers and local labor are involved in vocational education, regulations governing state approval of local programs operation and data reporting are probably required. This comes from use of the word "ensure."

The word "enhance" has connotations of promotion and public relations, two activities generally not thought of as state board functions. Enhance also suggests "improvement." Quantity improvement is rather easily identified, but quality improvement is less tangible. For the state to work to improve the quality of private sector involvement suggests a role and/or function not previously considered as belonging to the state board of education.

Again, in the interest of efficiency this mandate should be approached along with others related to the private sector involvement. Some suggestions follow:

- o Identify positive ways in which the public is already involved.
- o Describe ways in which the public is not currently involved but could be.
- o Develop a list of benefits to vocational education that result from public involvement.
- o Focus recommendations around instruction, curriculum, equipment, and personnel.
- o Survey local employers and labor organizations to determine their current involvement and interest in vocational education.
- o Ask local employers and labor organizations to suggest ways they can work with vocational education.
- o Solicit position papers and newsletter editorials from local employers and labor organizations pertinent to ways they can be involved in the local delivery of vocational education.
- o Survey vocational education teachers to determine ways they involve the private sector in their programs.
- o Encourage active local advisory councils.
- o Identify specific needs of local employers and local labor.
- o Align vocational education activities with local employer and labor needs to determine discrepancies.

- Review policy and practice of the state board of education to determine how it encourages and how it discourages public involvement at the local level.
- Examine state statutes to identify incentives for public involvement in local vocational education programs.
- Suggest information that indicates private sector involvement.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(8): "Each State council shall--report . . . the extent to which the individuals described in section 201 (b) ['handicapped individuals; disadvantaged individuals; adults who are in need of training or retraining; individuals who are single parents or homemakers; individuals who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping in vocational education and criminal offenders who are serving in a correctional institution'] are provided with equal access to quality vocational education programs; . . ."

Format: Report   Audience: State board

Emphasis is given in the Perkins Act to the provision of programs and services for targeted populations. Efforts to meet the council's mandate for "analyzing the availability of activities and services" may be easily coordinated with this mandate for efficiency. As the council analyzes the distribution of spending for vocational education, the emphasis given to targeted populations will also surface.

This mandate may also be reviewed in conjunction with the council's review of JTPA programs and services. State linkages to serve these special populations are apparent between vocational education and JTPA. If linkages are not apparent, the issue may be addressed by the council as it fulfills reporting requirements for both mandates.

"Equal access to quality vocational education programs" is a two-part emphasis of this mandate. Not only is equal access to be addressed but also whether or not the access is to high quality programs.

Some activities that may help the council in preparing its report include the following:

- Identify all state programs under the Perkins Act that serve the identified populations.
- Compile a similar listing of programs funded with other state and federal resources that serve these and other identified populations.
- Compare programs funded by the Perkins Act to those funded by other programs to identify coordination, duplications, voids, and so on.

- Suggest evaluation criteria when consulting with the state board that will ensure quality programs for the participants.
- Tour or visit special programs.
- Review the stated purposes of each of the programs and assess the extent to which they meet federal guidelines, as well as needs of the participants.
- Conduct hearings to gather information about services needed by targeted populations.
- Report on the distribution and use of funds for special programs designed to meet needs of special populations.
- Identify exemplary model programs that serve special needs of targeted populations.
- Assess the extent to which mainstreaming is used.
- Evaluate teacher preparation and inservice programs to determine the extent to which teachers are prepared to work with special needs students.
- Survey local school board members to determine their awareness of needs of special population groups in their districts.
- Review local advisory council minutes to assess the concern and emphasis given to programs to meet the needs of targeted groups.
- Prepare financial information that depicts the financial impact of providing quality vocational education programs to special populations.
- Collect data available from other sources that identifies the number of persons who may have special needs that vocational education can meet.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(9)(A)(i): "Each State council shall--evaluate at least once every two years the vocational education program delivery systems assisted under this Act, and under the Job Training Partnership Act, in terms of their adequacy and effectiveness in achieving the purposes of each of the two Acts. . . ."

Format: Advice Audience: Governor, State Board, State Job Training Coordinating Council, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Labor

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The mandates of the Perkins Act pursuant to council responsibilities for vocational education provide much of the information needed to fulfill this mandate. Most problems and positive features of the vocational education delivery system surface through other studies. Information about the JTPA delivery system may also surface, but the need for a more thorough evaluation of JTPA probably remains. JTPA generates a great deal of data and information for federal reporting purposes. The council should review this information to help identify areas it wishes to study further. This is much like a desk audit that throws up red flags. This report will be useful not only at the state level, but also at the federal level as reauthorization and new legislation are being prepared.

Ideas for evaluating the vocational education delivery system include the following:

- Identify the purposes of the Perkins Act.
- Identify the purposes of the JTPA.
- Collect information pertinent to the purposes of the two acts.
- Identify state needs that can be addressed by both acts.
- Survey clients and program participants to determine their perception of the services they received.
- Review data collected for reporting of both acts to ascertain the populations served, types of services given, cost of services, and so forth.
- Approach the evaluation by segments and examine one purpose of each act at a time.
- Work in concert with the state's JTCC for joint evaluation efforts where possible.
- Conduct public hearings about the adequacy and effectiveness of the two programs.
- Compare services provided with labor market information.
- Collect information about the use of vocational education programs in the provision of JTPA services.
- Assess the accessibility of vocational education to JTPA.
- Interview PIC members for their viewpoints on the quality of services.
- Compare training costs statewide.
- Analyze services needed in relation to services provided.
- Identify needed state policy to enhance the quality of the two programs.

- Assess the state's commitment to the two programs.
- Search for alternative delivery systems that may be useful in your state.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 112 (d)(9)(A)(ii): "Each State council shall--make recommendations . . . on the adequacy and effectiveness of coordination that takes place between vocational education and the Job Training Partnership Act."

Format: Recommendations   Audience: State board

Format: Advice   Audience: Governor, State JTCC, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Labor

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Emphasis on coordination throughout both the Perkins Act and JTPA is immense. Coordination must be addressed in state plans and in a variety of reports required of both programs. Council members will find evidence of coordination in nearly every initiative they undertake if they develop a consciousness level for it. The reverse is also true. Many activities reveal turf protection attitudes that are easily detected as barriers to many initiatives.

Following are some examples of activities that may help the council in collecting information about coordination:

- Analyze the services available through both programs.
- Identify vocational education programs used by JTPA to prepare clients for employment.
- Survey SDA personnel to determine how programs are coordinated.
- Determine why some school districts choose not to participate in JTPA.
- Assess the extent to which PICs and local advisory councils communicate about coordination efforts.
- Ask PICs and local advisory councils to list activities in which they could sponsor joint ventures.
- Interview SDAs, PICs, school administrators, and advisory councils to ask why they coordinate or do not coordinate programs.
- Identify state-level mechanisms for coordination and assess their effectiveness.
- Compile a listing of all activities used to enhance coordination at the local level.

- Determine what coordination activities have the greatest impact on program quality, number of clients/students served, or other areas of interest to the council.

- Meet jointly with the JTCC to discuss coordination strategies.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, Section 111(d): "Each State board, in consultation with the State council, shall establish a limited number of Technical Committees to advise the council and the board on the development of model curricula to address State labor market needs. Technical Committees shall develop an inventory of skills that may be used . . . to define state-of-the-art model curricula . . . provide the type and level of knowledge and skills needed for entry, retention and advancement in occupational areas. . . ."

This mandate is not mentioned in the Perkins Act where the establishment of the state council and its responsibilities are delineated. It is an indirect mandate because it directly mandates the state board to consult with the council. Further, it mandates that the technical committee advise the state council.

Use of the technical committee's advice may be helpful to the council in evaluating vocational education programs. Councils may become extremely involved in consulting with the state board about the manner in which the technical committees will design their work and the policies under which the committee will function.

The council's consultation may be enhanced by making suggestions such as the following for use by the board:

- Suggest individuals to serve on technical committees.

- Work with the state board to establish the process to be used by the committees.

- Suggest curriculum to be developed.

- Assist in identifying appropriate labor market needs.

- Consult on how the skills inventory will be designed.

REFERENCES

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act. Public Law 98-524. Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 1984. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 256 926).

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